



Essay
Bill Bryson
on the US
election page 16

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1996

WEATHER: Mostly dry and bright

(RRP) 40p

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Uncovered:
Anne's frank
diary page 3

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Peacemakers
in Middle East
battle page 12

The moral backlash

Crusaders are taking on the politicians – but history suggests they have an uphill struggle, writes Jack O'Sullivan

A crusade for the remoralising of the country has hit British politicians, and they have been quick to react. Yesterday, Frances Lawrence, widow of the murdered head teacher, Philip Lawrence, unveiled a personal manifesto aimed at creating a less violent society based on common civic values.

Within hours, leaders of the main political parties backed her initiative. Her ideas were "very exciting", according to Tony Blair, "very valuable", said the Lib Dem and promised John Major, they would feature in the Tory election platform. Her initiative came hard on the heels of the Snowdrop Petition from Dunblane parents and their supporters, whose moral anger forced MPs into changing policy on handguns.

These non-party campaigners, speaking for victims, seem to have caught the mood of the moment, a sense of frustration that Britain is becoming socially fractured while its formal leaders wring their hands. They follow urgent complaints about the country's condition from religious leaders.

New moralisers, like Mrs Lawrence, may be unschooled in politics. But they have been remarkably effective in sparking debate and demonstrating the gulf between Westminster and city streets. Their activities show how easy access to the media means outsiders can challenge the traditional way of doing politics.

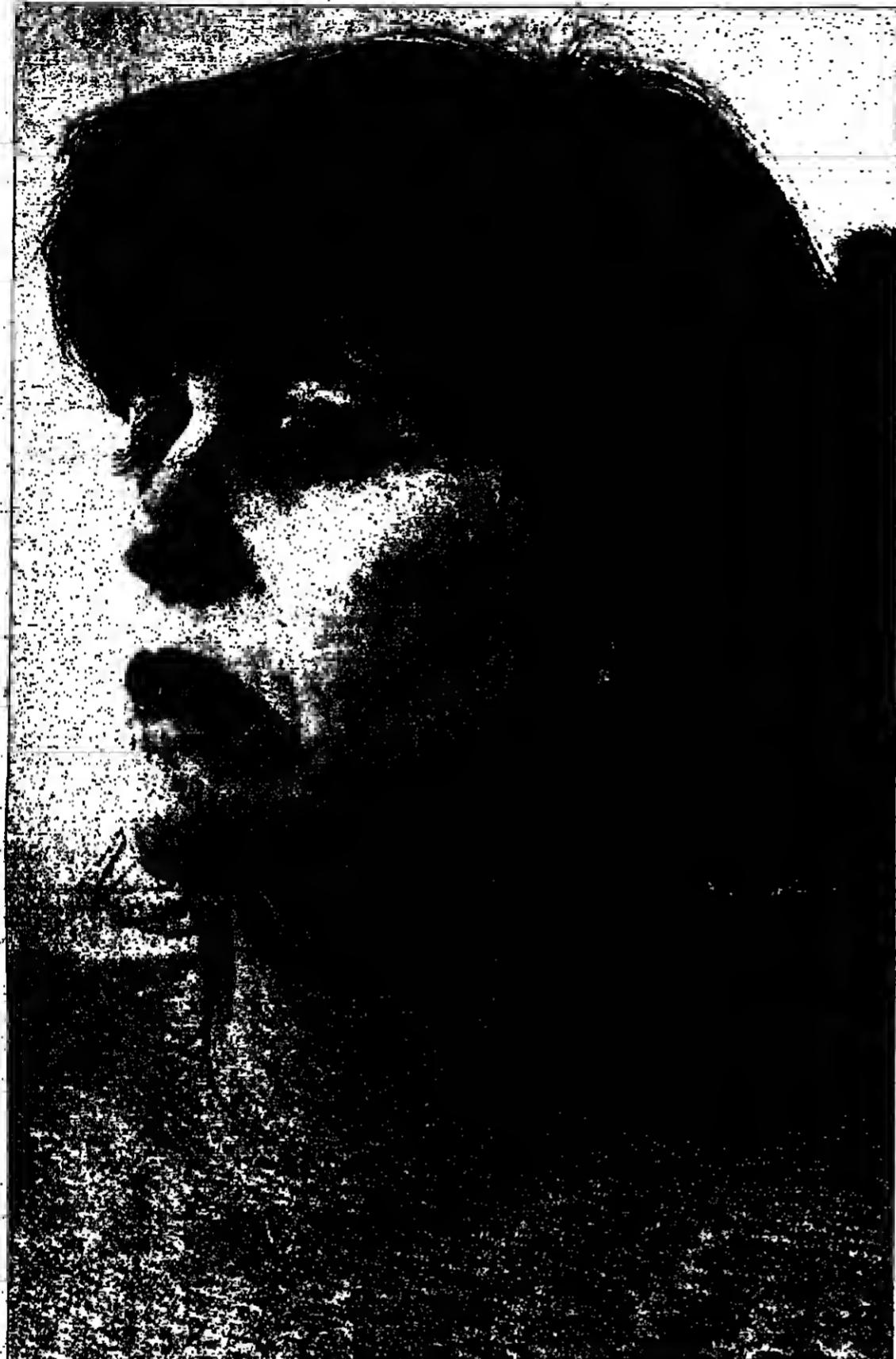
Many of these new moralisers are women, determined after a traumatic experience that "something must be done".

So Jayne Zito, whose husband was killed by the deranged schizophrenic, Christopher Cunnis, has succeeded in placing the failures of community care higher up the political agenda. The Snowdrop Petition is driven by local women who started by gathering more than 700,000 signatures, and ended up badgering reluctant politicians into accepting most of their proposals last week.

The new moralisers can be found among churchmen and politicians too. Yesterday, the Catholic bishops of England and Wales set out unusually specific demands for a statutory minimum wage, constitutional reform and action on unemployment.

On Sunday, Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, spoke emotionally about controlling video violence to undermine Britain's gun culture. "What do you expect if night after night, and in our cinemas, we see material which glorifies gratuitous violence?" he asked.

In June, the Archbishop of Canterbury told *The Independent* about his



Effective: Frances Lawrence yesterday, urging action towards a less violent society. Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

plans for a crusade to remoralise the country. Much of what he said was strikingly similar to Mrs Lawrence's manifesto; he demanded a new moral agenda in schools and an end to what he called "the privatisation of moral-

ity", the loss of a common sense of right and wrong.

But he also pointed to the danger that such rhetoric can too easily be wasted breath. "When I am at my most pessimistic," he said, "I seriously

doubt whether we can actually do any more than blow trumpets from castle tops and warn."

The Archishop hit on the crucial problem. Do these calls to action produce real results? Will Frances

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MPs ban TV and radio from sleaze hearings

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Television and radio coverage is expected to be barred by the committee investigating Commons sleaze allegations. The power to order a ban was endorsed by the Commons last year, because the Government feared bulletins could magnify the impact of hearings on the public.

Government whips believe that while they cannot exclude the press from the most dramatic hearings, television and sound broadcasts would risk turning proceedings into a media "circus". The Tory majority on the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee – chaired by the Cabinet minister Tony Newton, Leader of the Commons – will be used to ensure cameras and microphones are kept out.

The ban will cover potentially explosive evidence to be taken over the next few weeks by the committee from David Willetts, a Treasury minister and former whip who is alleged to have improperly intervened to defuse an earlier Commons in-



Gagging act: Tony Newton (left) and Neil Hamilton

quiry into claims that the Tory MP Neil Hamilton received cash from Mohamed al-Fayed, the owner of Harrods. But broadcasters could also be barred from hearings that could eventually be staged into the report, being prepared by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, into allegations against Mr Hamilton. The drama of Commons sleaze hearings is certain to be increased by the

Nolan clean-up. However, a report endorsed by MPs last year said: "In the special circumstances of the proposed new committee [Standards and Privileges] there is a case for allowing it a discretion to preclude the televising or sound broadcasting of particular hearings held in public..."

"It could only be justified in relation to the new committee on the grounds that the broadcasting of the examination of witnesses – particularly in the form of brief and unrepresentative extracts on news programmes – would risk giving wide and immediate publicity, under the protection of parliamentary privilege, to serious allegations against individual members [and others]. These might subsequently prove to be wholly unfounded but the manner of their publication would allow no effective remedy."

Yesterday a parliamentary source said that while powers had been taken to allow a broadcasting ban, no decision had been taken on its application to the Willets hearings – the first big test of the post-

court-like proceedings, with power to take evidence on oath and the opportunity for those against whom allegations have been made to be accompanied by an adviser, probably a leading barrister.

Yesterday a parliamentary source said that while powers had been taken to allow a broadcasting ban, no decision had been taken on its application to the Willets hearings – the first big test of the post-

QUICKLY
Wembley triumphs
Wembley's adoption as the national stadium appeared a formality after votes of confidence from football, athletics and rugby league. They confirmed the worst fears of the only rival, Manchester. Page 26

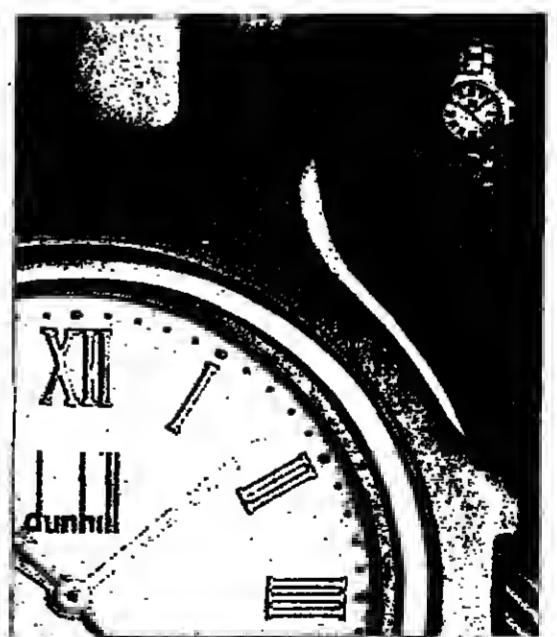
M16 'aided uprising'
Some of the rebels who took on the might of the Soviet Union in the Hungarian uprising were trained by M16, the British Secret Intelligence Service, it is claimed. Both the CIA and M16 had buried arms caches around Prague. Page 13

Bass bid hitch
The Office of Fair Trading suggests that the bid by Carlsberg and Tetley for Bass should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Page 18

Cars win space race
The winning design for the building to replace the widely disliked headquarters of the Department of the Environment in Marsham Street, London, contains space for 1,200 cars. The present building can take only 300. Page 5

No crisis' in Belgium
Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Belgian Prime Minister, denied that there was a crisis of confidence in the state. Every country had moments of emotional problems that brought political change, he said. Page 9

ALFRED DUNHILL



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news

Teachers demand banning of 60 children

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Staff at a school in West Yorkshire are calling for up to 60 of their pupils to be excluded because they say they are out of control. The teachers at the 600-pupil Ridings School in Halifax are voting on possible strike action if the local authority does not step in.

The Ridings was at the centre of a similar argument last month over one of its pupils, Sarah Walker, 13. Staff threat-

ened to strike when she was returned to lessons after being excluded for violence towards a teacher and another pupil.

The head's decision was overturned by an appeals committee but her parents eventually agreed to withdraw her as staff were on the brink of walking out.

Now 31 members of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers, who form the great majority of the staff, are threatening action over what they say is a complete breakdown of

discipline. Last night both the head, Karen Stansfield, and her deputy were said to have resigned and were expected to go at the end of term.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWT, would not comment on the number of pupils he wanted to see excluded from the school, but said that if it were necessary to remove 60 to impose proper discipline, it should be done.

Philip Lawrence, the murdered Loddon head teacher, had had to exclude 60 pupils in

two years from St George's School in Maida Vale, London, he said. "Why not? If it is good enough for Philip Lawrence it is good enough for elsewhere," he added.

"There is a very serious disciplinary situation at this school, and we want the local authority to go in there and resolve it. There are a whole raft of measures which want putting in place."

Mr de Gruchy said he hoped his members would not be forced into all-out strike action but that employment laws made it necessary to ballot them now in order to be able to take action from the end of the month.

A meeting a week ago with the school's governors had not led to an agreement, he said, and local newspapers in Calderdale had since started reporting the story.

Last night the chair of governors at the school, Reverend Stan Brown, said there was a problem with disruptive behaviour at the school, but that he was disappointed by the stance taken by the teachers.

strike over disruptive pupils. teacher expel Matthew Wilson, 10. It also emerged last month that Andrew Eason, seven, had been awarded legal aid to mount a High Court challenge to his expulsion from Waller's Infants' school in Trafford, Greater Manchester.

School exclusions have been increasing rapidly over the past few years, but while some people attribute the problem to rising disciplinary problems, others say that pressure on teachers has made them less tolerant of difficult pupils.

Ex-Tory MP makes Labour his latest stop

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The recent state of political defections was capped yesterday by the former Tory MP Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler, who announced his conversion to Labour from the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Brocklebank-Fowler was the only Conservative MP to defect to the Social Democrats in 1981, when 25 Labour MPs helped to form the breakaway party grouping.

He subsequently lost his Norfolk North West seat to the Tories in the 1983 general election, who held it on a reduced majority of just over 3,000 votes.

At the last election, he stood as the Liberal Democrat candidate in Norfolk South, which the Tories held with Mr Brocklebank-Fowler trailing more than 17,000 votes behind.



Brocklebank-Fowler: Con, SDP, Lib Dem, now new Lab

But, having belonged to three parties over the past 15 years, Mr Brocklebank-Fowler yesterday told *The Independent* that it was time for another move - to Tony Blair's new Labour Party. "Under Tony Blair's leadership, the Labour Party has the vision to implement the reforms necessary to secure a prosperous future, into the millennium, for all our people," he said.

"My decision to join the Labour Party is prompted by Tony Blair's determination to pursue constitutional reform, efficient economic management, and fairer social provision which alone can restore One Nation."

Mr Brocklebank-Fowler was particularly scathing about the Conservatives last night, saying: "Their divisions over Europe and the scandalous behaviour of ministers are too sickening for words. Another Conservative government would be a dreadful blow for democracy."

Having been a parliamentary candidate for 30 years, and having served as an MP for 13 years, Mr Brocklebank-Fowler said he had no wish to stand again, but he would be working for Labour in his old constituency of Norfolk North-West, which had a Tory majority of 11,564 votes over Labour at the last election.

He added: "Labour has got to appeal to the social democratic centre and, under Tony Blair, that is what it is doing."

Why I have joined Labour, page 17

Father of Clare Short's baby speaks of pain over adoption



Happy family: Andrew and Aileen Moss, with their sons Edward, aged eight, and three-year-old Benjamin. Mr Moss was worried how the boys would react. Photographs: Brian Harris

• There wasn't a day when I didn't ask myself: How could you give your son away? •

Steve Boggan
Chief Reporter

Last Thursday, news broke in *The Independent* of Clare Short's reunion with the son she gave up for adoption 31 years ago. The joy of that moment was shared by Andrew Moss, the boy's father, but it meant too, that he and his family were besieged by the media.

He asked *The Independent* to shield his family from the unwanted attention for a few days. While we did he told us his own story. This is it.

As baggage goes, it couldn't have been heavier. For Andrew Moss, it weighed heavy in mind, and it hung around his neck for more than 20 years.

It was no more than a holdall, but its contents dragged down his life, his moods; it distorted the person he planned to be and destroyed the future he believed he had.

It contained 12 nappies and a baby bath belonging to his son before, after six weeks, he gave him away. This was the baby that was presented last week as Clare Short's long-lost son, a son who was secretly mourned over each day by his mother and father.

On Saturday, that baby, now 31-year-old Toby Graham, met Andrew Moss for only the second time - a father and son reunion that Mr Moss believed would never happen.

The two met at Lancaster railway station and spent the morning together before travelling to a hotel where Toby, a City lawyer, met his half-brothers, Edward, eight, and Benjamin, three, for the first time.

They formed a bond almost immediately, to the relief of Mr Moss, 54, and his wife of 17 years, Aileen, 47. But there was clearly much for Mr Moss to deal with.

"I put Toby's things - the nappies and the bath - in a bag and I kept them with me for over 20 years. I couldn't throw them away," he said.

"There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't ask myself: How could you do that? How

could you give your son away?"

Mr Moss was 23 and Ms Short was 18 when, at Keele University, she became pregnant. They left the university and moved to Leeds where Ms Short took a year out while Mr Moss studied philosophy.

"We were both surviving on my grant and we were living in these disgusting digs in Chapelizod," said Mr Moss.

"We both had high hopes for the future - I wanted to be a drummer in a rock 'n' roll band. We were young and foolish, but more than anything we were

and depression and an overriding sense of guilt.

Mr Moss explained: "I knew just after I met Andrew that there was this great thing weighing him down.

"He is a good person but he spent so much time punishing himself. He kept the baby's things and couldn't throw them away until a few years ago when I told him to let them go.

"Rediscovering Toby has meant so much to both of us. He is a wonderful man, so like his father, and we are both very proud of him."

newspapers but even in that, there was an attempt to purge feelings of guilt.

"Naming our second child Beojamin was an explicit and calculated and real attempt to try to make amends for what I had done," said Mr Moss.

"With Aileen's agreement, I wanted to call this child Benjamin and give him the love and all the things for him that I hadn't done for the first Beojamin. I had no idea that, three years later, the first Benjamin would come along."

Toby was brought up by John Graham, a company director, and his wife, Maureen, in Cheshire.

"Toby is such a lovely boy," said Mr Moss. "We met for the first time at York station. We hadn't arranged a specific place and at first I thought he hadn't turned up, so I called Aileen, and then Toby thought I hadn't turned up, so he called her, and eventually we got together."

"We walked and talked and popped into the Three Horseshoes in Great Ouseburn for a pint and I just wanted to hold his hand. I am incredibly proud of him and I just want to do so much for him. Love is not finite; it is infinitely divisible and I have so much for him."

"He is a real credit to Mr and Mrs Graham. I can't thank them enough for what they have done. It sounds as though they were wonderful parents."

There is gratitude, too, for Toby's wife, Annie, and excitement over his two daughters, Alice, aged two, and Sophie, one.

"I have seen pictures of them and they look wonderful," said Mr Moss. "I am looking forward to meeting them, but it all has to be done patiently."

Mr Moss knows that too much must not be attempted too soon and there is an anxiety that people's feelings should not be trodden upon. But, gradually, things are working out.

"I was a little worried about how my boys would react when I introduced them to Toby," said Mr Moss. "But Edward just stepped forward and gave him a great big hug."

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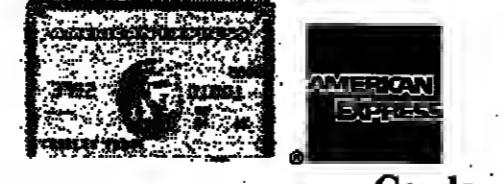
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Photo opportunity: Clare Short and her son Toby Graham meeting the press in London last week

vain and selfish. I remember the start of day we gave up the baby. We were numb. Silent. I have asked myself a million times how I could have done it but I just can't answer the question. As I say, I can remember the start of the day, but I can't remember the end of it."

"I put Toby's things - the nappies and the bath - in a bag and I kept them with me for over 20 years. I couldn't throw them away," he said.

"There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't ask myself: How could you do that? How

The guilt of letting his first child go prevented Mr Moss from having more children until late in life. "I didn't think I would make a good father - how could I be? I gave my first child away," he said.

But, eventually, Edward and Benjamin were born, two bright, happy and intelligent boys in whom Mr Moss has been able to invest years of pent-up love. "He is a wonderful father," said Mrs Moss.

The naming of the second child as Benjamin has been picked upon cynically by some

news

Teachers savage reading report

Fran Abrams
Education Correspondent

Tensions between schools' inspectors and the education establishment worsened as a critical Ofsted report on reading standards was dismissed by academics as "flawed".

London University's Institute of Education has accused the inspectors of "cherry picking" evidence to show inner-city primary schools in a bad light. The controversial chief inspector of schools, Chris Woodhead, says he fails even to understand why such allegations are being made.

The institute has published a stinging response to a survey by the schools' inspection body, which said that four out of ten pupils were at least two years behind with their reading. A row broke out when the work was published last May because the local authorities involved said the final report had been rewritten to emphasise its negative side.

According to the institute's director, Professor Peter Mortimore, the evidence it contained was used unfairly to attack teachers and to call for the use of more formal methods such as whole-class teaching and phonics.

His analysis, written with Professor Harvey Goldstein, says that each of the 45 schools studied was visited for one day only, and that children were inappropriate and out-of-date reading tests. It adds that the schools in the study, all of which were in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Islington and Southwark, were not typical and that the report should not have used them to draw general conclusions.

The boroughs were some of the poorest in the country, it says, and only 45 per cent of the pupils in them were white. More than half were receiving free school meals, many did not speak English as a first language.

Thirty years on, Aberfan remembers its day of darkness



Lest we forget: David George, with his grandson, Marc, collect water yesterday for flowers to put on the grave of his daughter, Christine, who died aged 10, when a slag mountain crushed Pantglas primary school in Aberfan, killing 116 children and 28 adults

Photograph: Rob Stratton

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M03 134 NG

Wallace and Gromit stage their comeback

David Usborne
New York

The city-wide hunt for a pair of Britons who vanished in New York on Saturday soon after touching down from London was called off yesterday after they were discovered by a Yellow Cab driver and returned to their hotel.

The pair, identified only as Wallace and Gromit, mistakenly climbed into the boot of a taxi for their ride into Manhattan. It appears that on arrival neither the driver nor the couple's chaperon for the visit, the animated-film director, Nick Park, remembered to let them out.

Even by the standards of New York, the welcome for Wallace and Gromit was inhospitable in the extreme. They were trapped in the taxi boot for 36 hours, suffering from the bumps and bounces of the Big Apple's potholes, until their discovery yesterday morning.

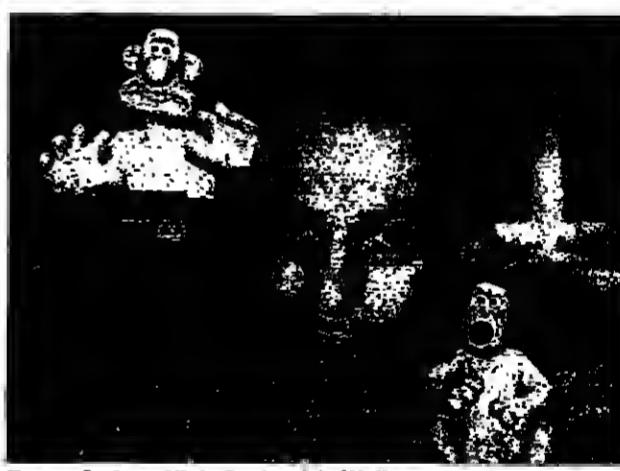
Police could not comment on what induced them to take to the trunk, as car boots are described here, in the first place. Unconfirmed reports suggested, however, that Wallace and Gromit have several unusual

quirks: it was rumoured that they were only six inches high, are made of clay and have illusions of Hollywood stardom.

Particularly puzzling, however, are rumours that Wallace, a toothy-looking man with a taste for Wensleydale, and Gromit, who may be a dog, were also in possession of a motorcycle and sidecar. It is believed they were too frightened to make the journey themselves into Manhattan.

Considerable relief was expressed by Mr Park, who also offered explanations regarding Hollywood and suggested he and his friends were in New York to promote their latest venture: a US version of a Wallace and Gromit video entitled *The Close Shave: A Close Shave* indeed and not at all a Grand Day Out. Publicity for the pair is now unlikely to be a problem, because the search for became hot news on the city's radio airwaves all weekend.

The two Britons were speeding yesterday recovering from their traumatic episode, a publicist said. "They are a bit battered." The heroic taxi-driver, meanwhile, turned down the offer of a \$500 reward.



Feat of clay: Nick Park with Wallace and Gromit, who were liberated from the boot of a Yellow Cab

DAILY POEM

Archy and Mehitabel:
archy figures out aunt prudence

By Don Marquis

i know why
aunt prudence hecklebury
does not like me
period
it came to me
just now
exclamation point
it is because
i have six
legs
exclamation point
please ask her if
this is not so
interrogation point
if she disapproves
of me for that
reason what
are her views
with regard to
the octopus
question mark
and i shudder to
think of what
she must think
when she sees
a centipede
period
archy

Don Marquis (1878-1937) was considered Mark Twain's successor as America's foremost literary wit. He spent his working life as a newspaper columnist, first for the *New York Sun* and later for the *Herald Tribune*, but for nearly 20 years spun out the tales of Archy and Mehitabel – part social commentary, part muses on existence – to the delight of his readers. Bloodaxe publishes archyology: *the lost tales of archy and mehitabel* this month at £7.95.



Wine and breeze: The Rev Robert Middlewick prepares to bless part of this year's English wine harvest at Lamberhurst Vineyard, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The growers expect that the 1996 harvest will be the best for several years. Some unblessed grapes were picked last weekend

Photograph: Edward Webb

Foetuses 'can feel pain' at six weeks

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A foetus should be given painkilling drugs and adequate anaesthesia prior to surgery performed on it while it is still in the womb, according to a report which says that a foetus may feel pain as early as six weeks.

A review of evidence for and against foetal sentience concludes that doctors must "err on the side of caution," and protect a foetus from potentially painful procedures at the earliest stages of development.

This would include abortion and raises the possibility of painkillers being administered specifically for the foetus, especially during late abortions.

The report, which recommends that all pregnant women are told of the most up-to-date scientific data on foetal sentience and calls for new laws to protect the unborn child, was immediately attacked by pro-choice groups as being fundamentally anti-abortion and designed to make women considering a termination feel guilty. However, its findings have been described as "generally well balanced" by *New Scientist* magazine, which was given an advance copy to review.

The Commission of Inquiry into Foetal Sentience which published its report yesterday, was set up by Care, a Christian education charity, in response to growing public concern about the capability of the foetus to experience pain or suffering. It took evidence from internationally renowned scientists, neurologists, and doctors and reviewed more than 70 scientific papers and reports.

Its main finding is that while it is not possible to say exactly when a foetus may feel pain, there are sensory receptors present over almost all its body surface by 14 weeks' gestation, and all the structures necessary for the perception of pain are in place by 26 weeks. The Com-

mission says that some experts say the ability to feel pain may occur from 13 weeks while others say a foetus may feel pain from as early as six weeks.

Kypros Nicolaides, Professor of Foetal Medicine at King's College Hospital, London, and the doctor who cared for Mandy Allwood who was pregnant with eight babies, told the Commission that because of uncertainty the foetus should be treated as if it felt pain from the first trimester of pregnancy.

Dr John Wyatt, a consultant paediatrician at University College London Hospitals, and a member of the Commission, said that there had been a "conspiracy of silence" over the issue of foetal sentience because scientists were concerned that their views would be misused by pro- and anti-abortionists.

Dr Wyatt said it was the duty of scientists to emphasise what they did not know and the duty of doctors to err on the side of caution. "This kind of paranoia and impugning of the motives of people who want to ask honest questions must stop."

Newborn babies were, until a decade ago, believed incapable of feeling pain and were subjected to painful medical interventions without analgesia.

Following evidence that neonates experienced a surge of stress hormones indicative of pain during these procedures, doctors now routinely use painkillers.

Dr Wyatt said foetal surgery, such as intrauterine transfusions, draining of blocked kidneys and removal of fluid on the brain, were currently carried out without analgesia, although there was evidence that the foetus suffered stress. The Care report follows the all-party Parliamentary Pro-Life Group which concluded that a human foetus experiences pain from the 10th week of its existence.

■ *Human Sentience before Birth*, from Care, 53 Romney Street, London SW1P 3RR.



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news

From fasting to freedom: Gandhi scribblings set to fetch £1m

Marianne Macdonald

Handwritten papers belonging to Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian leader, have come to light for the first time since his assassination nearly 50 years ago.

The 70 speeches, articles and draft letters document the last momentous months of the life of the man who, more than any other, helped to secure Indian independence. They are expected to fetch up to £800,000 at auction. Their whereabouts had been unknown until they resurfaced at Phillips after being in the possession of one of Gandhi's secretaries for almost five decades.

The auction house describes the collection – much of it scribbled in English on the back of envelopes, circulars and recycled letters – as ranking with the great presidential archives and the Churchill papers.

Felix Pyor, Phillips' manuscript consultant, said yesterday: "Any single

document from this archive, were it to have appeared on its own, would have been considered exceptional."

Gandhi, who vowed not to eat until peace was restored to Delhi, wrote: "At once I saw that I had to be in Delhi and do or die ... No man, if he is pure, has anything more

precious to give than his life."

Also under the hammer is the prologue to Gandhi's will and a draft letter to Lord Mountbatten, written shortly before independence, in which he expresses his dismay at the viceroy's support of the partition of India.

"I pointed to the initial mistake of the British being party to splitting India into two. It is not possible to undo the mistake ... [But] the very admirable doctrine of non-violence sometimes fails completely. They are wrong down to the root of this document when he has to remedy, otherwise, left for him such an occasion, has come my way when on

fasts to Delhi from Calcutta, was on my way to West Bengal, and that was why he lay helpless and

Prophetically, a draft speech by the man who was assassinated in New Delhi on 30 January 1948 also addresses the fear that the British remaining in India would be murdered.

"All promise of protection by authority in isolated places is vain – it simply cannot be done, no matter how efficient the military and police machine may be, which, it must be admitted, it is not."

Proceeds of the sale will go to a Hindu charitable foundation.



Hunger for liberty: Mahatma Gandhi during a fast in New Delhi, not long before he was assassinated

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Belg

Protest as paedophile envoy keeps his pension

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Robert Coghlan, the diplomat jailed for three years for importing child pornography through the diplomatic bag, will not lose his pension rights despite being sacked by the Foreign Office.

The decision by the Foreign Office not to remove the pension rights from Coghlan was attacked as "weak" by Harry Cohen, the Labour MP for Leyton, who also demanded the

"tightening up of vetting procedures" of diplomats to stop other paedophiles being employed by the Government.



Jailed: Robert Coghlan used the diplomatic bag

bag. All diplomats are warned that prohibited items cannot be taken by diplomatic bag, which can include containers carried by diplomatic privilege but previously were not specifically told to exclude pornography.

"We are not aware of the detailed contents of Mr Coghlan's videos impounded by HM Customs and Excise," Mr Hanley told Mr Cohen. "The material is held by HM Customs and Excise pending destruction."

There would be no changes in the vetting procedures although they had allowed a man of Coghlan's tastes into the diplomatic service, the minister

said. "The vetting process cannot claim to be infallible and it relies to a large extent on an individual's co-operation and honesty, supported by the watchfulness of managers and colleagues, rather than on the sort of in-depth and ongoing investigation you may have in mind."

"Such investigation would inevitably be very intrusive and therefore unacceptable in terms of the liberty of the individual and invidious if applied only to members of the Diplomatic Service."

Mr Cohen is planning to protest over the issue in the Commons. He said: "This man has shamed Britain abroad but many people have lost their pensions for much lesser offences. By similar logic, perhaps the Foreign Office should be paying the spy George Blake his pension."

"They've added pornography to the list of prohibited materials for transporting but not to the list of purposes for security vetting. They should tighten up the security vetting."

+

Belgians lost in a moral wasteland



Mr Dehaene meeting Sabine Dardenne (centre) and Laetitia Delhez, rescued in August from a house owned by Dutroux

Sarah Helm
Brussels

Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Belgian Prime Minister, yesterday rejected claims that Sunday's mass protest in Brussels signalled a far-reaching crisis of confidence in the state's institutions.

Speaking after the march through Brussels, when Belgians expressed frustration at the failure of the justice system over the Dutroux child sex scandal, Mr Dehaene insisted that public disillusionment with the political class is common to all countries.

"In any country you have moments when emotional problems ignite energy and allow problems to be attacked faster," he said in an interview with the BBC. "It is part of the political process."

However, as sporadic protests continued throughout Belgium yesterday, Mr Dehaene's coalition government remained under enormous

pressure to produce action rather than words.

The Prime Minister has promised to reform the justice system by ending political appointment of judges.

Under the system, parties have the right to nominate a certain number of judges.

Politicisation of the judiciary has increased suspicion that the failure to tackle the Dutroux paedophile case is part of a wider political cover-up.

Despite Mr Dehaene's offer to tackle the problem, he has so far failed to explain how the reforms might work. Most observers are sceptical about the ability of his government to see them through.

Strong words at the weekend from King Albert added to the pressure on the government to find some way of reassuring the public.

The King called for every aspect of the affair to be re-examined in detail and in the open.

He said that the tragedy of

the child deaths and abductions must be the occasion of a profound change in our country.

Over the next few weeks the government faces the prospect of more evidence of political corruption emerging as investigations continue into a number of related cases.

The inquiry into the case of Marc Dutroux, the man charged with running a child sex-ring, must now be set back on track following the dismissal of the chief investigating magistrate, which sparked Sunday's protest.

The case has already led to the arrest of several police officers. At the same time, the government is certain to face new pressure to explain the possible links between the Dutroux case and inquiries into the death of André Cools, the former deputy prime minister shot in a mafia-style killing in 1991.

Other high-level corruption inquiries are also continuing.

Scandals fuel the fires of separatism

Sarah Helm
Brussels
Mary Dejevsky
Paris

The wave of scandals in Belgium has triggered fresh moves towards separation between the country's feuding French- and Dutch-speaking communities. It has evoked new support among some French-speakers for closer ties with France, but also put a question-mark over the future of Brussels, capital of the European Union.

A mass protest on Sunday over child abductions and murders may have shown new "solidarity" between the French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemings. But equally, the current strife may just hasten political moves towards greater separation.

Sparked by their fury over the failure of state institutions to respond to the current crisis, the Walloons and the Flemings have intensified their debate about how the country should pursue its federal agenda.

Flemish extremists have exploited the fact that the latest scandals broke in Wallonia to promote their argument.

Outraged by the Flemish tactics, Francophone intellectuals have now chosen to step forward. Francophones must "mobilise," a group of "éminences grises" proclaimed in a declaration published in *Le Soir* newspaper. To prevent Flanders dominating the march towards greater federalism, the Walloons must rise up and construct a future on their terms, it said.

The call has been taken up by prominent Francophone politicians, including Robert Collignon, the socialist minister president of the Walloon regional government. In a speech earlier this month, he advocated a study of "all institutional scenarios" for the future of Wallonia. "We will intensify our relations with France, a country with which we share a language and culture," he said. "Are not Walloons closer to Paris than most French people?"

The idea of melding Wallonia with France has frequently surfaced since Belgium was founded in 1839. It was raised again with the first meeting in elections last year of a group called "France". For their part, the French

have tended to regard Belgians as the butt of nationally reassuring jokes. In the last month or so, though, the joking has stopped. The Belgian crisis has revived a strand of French thinking that hankers after bringing Wallonia back into France, something that Napoleon tried (and failed) to do 200 years ago.

There are other historical echoes. This weekend, *Le Point* magazine said that a 1943 study commissioned by US President Franklin Roosevelt envisaged the creation of a greater Wallonia governed by France, which would have incorporated not just French-speaking Belgium, but also Luxembourg.

Le Monde devoted a whole page this month to considering those Belgians who have fallen for "Marianne". The author suggested that some French diplomats were sympathetic to the idea and held regular meetings with MFRF members.

A break-up of Belgium would entail knotty complications: not all Walloons would be happy about being united with France; and then there are the German-speaking Belgians in the East of the country, who would not be happy about joining Germany or France but could not survive as a nation on their own.

A break-up of Belgium could also mean the break-up of Brussels, capital not only of the Belgian state but headquarters of the EU organisations. Brussels (inconveniently) is a largely French-speaking city geographically located in Flanders.

The Walloon declaration makes clear that greatest fear for the Francophones – and the greatest threat to Wallonia – is the Flemish claim to the city. The declaration says that Wallonia could be severed from Flanders, as long as the Flemish give up the cultural capital. The same group says that if Brussels is not to be the capital of Wallonia, it could become an "international city".

The suggestion for a "Walloon-Bruxellois" alliance has outraged Flemish leaders, who argue that Brussels is the capital of Flanders. It proves just how serious the separatist debate is becoming. "It may seem unrealistic for now, but the break up of Belgium could really happen. And Brussels would be our Jerusalem," said François Perrin, a prominent Francophone socialist.

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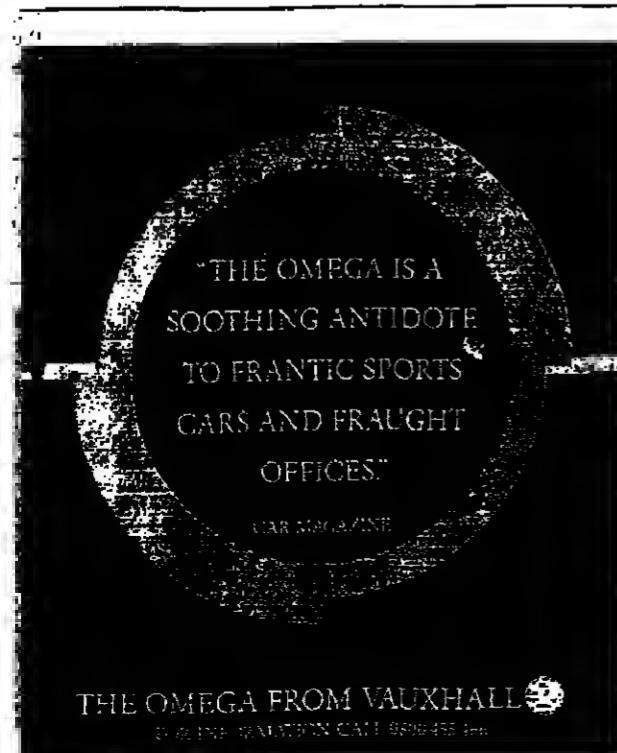
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international

US warns Europe on Middle East meddling

Robert Fisk
Damascus

In a letter which has both angered and astonished the European Union, Warren Christopher, the United States Secretary of State, has warned all 15 EU foreign ministers not to meddle in the US-led Middle East "peace process".

Despite the fact that the "process", in the eyes of many EU ministers, is being destroyed by the refusal of Israel's right-wing government to honour the Oslo accords – and by Washington's failure to hold Israel to its signed agreements – Mr Christopher insisted that European nations should "refrain" from any act which might endanger the Middle East peace at what he called a "delicate moment".

The letter was sent individually to governments after the Dublin summit earlier this

month when European leaders decided to dispatch the Irish Foreign Minister, Dick Spring, to Israel and the occupied territories for urgent talks with the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat. Mr Spring's Middle East trip was followed this week by that of President Jacques Chirac who has repeatedly emphasised France's desire to see a Palestinian state and the completion of a Middle East settlement based on land for peace, the formula originally agreed at the 1991 Madrid conference.

The French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, has sent a diplomatic reply to Mr Christopher – pointing out that France would never do anything to harm the peace process nor try to take the place of the US – but in Damascus on Saturday, Mr Chirac pointedly referred to "the explosive potential of poor-

ly managed international situations", adding that it was "time for Europe to co-sponsor this process".

The "poor management", it seemed clear, referred to Mr Christopher's lamentable stewardship of the "peace process". No sooner had Mr Chirac landed in Israel yesterday than David Bar-Ilan, Mr Netanyahu's spokesman, rejected the French proposal. Despite Mr Chirac's insistence that he was a "great friend" of Israel, Mr Bar-Ilan said that "Europe and particularly France have taken such a one-sided pro-Arab position that it would be foolhardy to consider" an enlarged European role in the "peace process".

EU governments appreciate that President Bill Clinton cannot bring pressure on Israel in advance of the US elections but fear that the Clinton administration – the most pro-

Israeli in a generation – may prove equally weak in confronting Mr Netanyahu's government afterwards.

One senior EU official said here at the weekend: "If things don't change quickly, there's going to be a real explosion in the occupied territories, worse than the one which cost 75 lives last month. We have to tell Netanyahu that. The peace process is not dead but it is in a very, very serious state."

As if to reinforce his words, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria sounded bleaker than ever before in his own assessment of the "peace" that the world once believed to be imminent in the Middle East. "The present position taken by the Israeli government," he said, "amounts to a total refusal [to accept] the foundations of the peace that have already been agreed; it is a total abolition of the peace process."



All smiles: President Jacques Chirac (right) and Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem yesterday.

Photograph: AFP

Mr Allen and his FEROCIOUS butterflies.



For years Mr and Mrs Steven Unique produced butterflies in their garden in Great Billingham. Now it's been a chance for lepidopterists and nature-lovers alike. And it's not surprising. Mr Unique has never reported seeing the moth by a manufacturing plant, some 100 miles from the city, and decided that to protect the plant, the garden must be registered under the Pesticide Use Licensing Act. It was registered and nothing or face closure.

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SA truth inquiry set to subpoena PW Botha

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Former state president PW Botha gave direct orders for the bombing of the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches in Johannesburg, a former police commissioner told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) yesterday.

General Johan van der Merwe, subpoenaed by the commission, said that Adrian Vlok, the former law and order minister, instructed him to destroy Khotso House in 1988 and said the order came from Mr Botha.

Yesterday's revelation takes the commission, set up to uncover the truth about the apartheid years, closer than ever before to the old National Party cabinet and to Mr Botha. It now looks increasingly likely that the former state president will be subpoenaed to appear before the TRC. A few weeks ago, Mr Vlok became the first minister to be called.

Such a subpoena would be politically delicate and socially divisive. Mr Botha refuses to recognise the commission.

Yesterday's evidence undermines FW de Klerk's assertion, during his party's official submission to the TRC in the summer, that while the National Party created the conditions under which atrocities could take place, it never ordered them. Mr Botha did not co-operate with the party's submission.

General van der Merwe's revelation took yesterday's TRC hearing in Johannesburg by surprise. He had been called to give evidence in support of five police officers seeking amnesty for an array of apartheid-era atrocities in return for information on 40 killings, including high-profile political assassinations. The five – including Brigadier Jack Cronje, former commander of the notorious Vlakplaas hit squad – are the most senior police officers to approach the commission.

Lawyers claimed before the hearing that their clients would implicate senior officers, former ministers and even provide ammunition for the TRC to subpoena Mr Botha. Further allegations concerning the former president are expected during the week-long hearing.

At the opening of the hearing the men called on their superior officers and National Party leaders to admit authorising illegal acts to keep themselves in power. In a statement they said they found it hard to believe Mr de Klerk's assertion that he had been unaware of government-authorized assassinations, tortures and rapes.

Extracts from a 1977 speech by General Jan Smuts and a poem by Afrikaans poet CL Louis Leipoldt set the emotional atmosphere as the men claimed they were not criminals but had always acted in the interests of the National Party and their country. They said they had been misguided but were brought up to believe apartheid was sanctioned by God through the church and that black people were inferior. The men must convince the commission that their acts were politically motivated to win amnesty.



General Meiring: Denied files had been destroyed

posed subpoenas on four police officers, who are witnesses in pending criminal cases, to this week's commission hearings. The commission reserved judgment on Mr D'Oliviera's objections.

The courts complain that the TRC is interfering with long-running criminal investigations. Two weeks ago the commission complained that the courts were the wrong forum for South Africa to deal with its apartheid past following the state's failure to convict General Magnus and a handful of generals of 13 murders, despite a seven-month trial costing 7 million rands.

In a separate development yesterday an official submission to the TRC by the South African National Defence Force denied that thousands of compromising military documents from the apartheid era had been destroyed by the military. General George Meiring, head of the SANDF, said in his testimony to the commission that he was not aware of any unauthorised or illegal destruction of documents.

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John Hillaby

Pedestrian was the last word to apply to John Hillaby, though he has been called the most celebrated pedestrian in England. Yet like his contemporaries Clive Wainwright and Wilfred Theisiger, he was admired as much by armchair idlers as by the serious walking fraternity. Whether pacing rapidly through the streets of London or across the high moors of his beloved Yorkshire, his tall, spare figure was instantly recognisable, and even in his seventies he could leave younger men struggling in his wake.

Born in 1917, the son of a printer, he was educated at Woodhouse Grove School, Leeds, from where he made his early countryside excursions. He began his career as a journalist on local weeklies in the West Riding, but was quickly caught up in the Second World War, seeing active service with the Royal Artillery, notably in the retreat through Dunkirk. He married, first, in 1940, Eleanor Riley, with whom he had two daughters, though this marriage was later dissolved.

Returning from the war he took up journalism again, and from 1949 was zoological correspondent on the then *Manchester Guardian*, *The New York Times* engaged him as European science correspondent from 1951, and the *New Scientist* as biological consultant from 1953.



Hillaby: passionate about the natural world. Photograph: Michael Alcott

He published his first book, *Within the Stream*, in 1949, and all the time he was travelling, in Africa, North America and, of course, in Britain. He never scorned modern transport (though he hated motorways), but used it mainly to get him to where he wanted to start serious travel, which for him was on his own two feet.

Disembarking from the boat at the Hook of Holland at the beginning of his walk to Nice he observed that:

Most of the passengers drew ashore.

They hooted at each other. They hooted at me. Normally, there is

nothing I hate more than being hooted at... It gives me high-minded notions of being the only traveller in step in a world gone mad on wheels.

Hillaby was a director of the Universities Federation of Animal Welfare, and a frequent broadcaster on radio and television. He was made a Fellow of the Zoological Society, was awarded an honorary D.Litt. by the City University, and in 1973 was appointed Woodward Lecturer at Yale University.

After publishing *Nature and Man* in 1960, Hillaby really made his impact upon the literary scene with *Journey to the Jade Sea* (1964), about his remarkable thousand-mile walk from Northern Kenya to Lake Rudolf, alone except for his hired bearers and a string of

camels, many of whom acquire personality and character under his pen. His rueful sense of this novitiate, inept with the animals, awkward with his rifle, and dependent on the Africans for guidance and support, is belied by the achievement itself and by the professionalism of his planning and organisation. The reviewers gave it warm praise, as much for its literary quality as for the journey itself, and the book remains a classic among travel writings, having brought a new, individual and endearing personality before the reading public.

It also set the pattern and style for his later writings: *Journey Through Britain* (1968), an account of his walk from Land's End to John-o'-Groats, almost entirely on tracks and bridle ways; *Journey Through Europe* (1972), his similar walk from the Hook of Holland to Nice by way of the Alps; and *Journey Through Love* (1976), on scattered travels in Britain and America, which also recounts the death from cancer in 1972 of his second wife, Thelma ("Tilly"), whom he had married in 1966.

Hillaby was deeply affected by Thelma's death, but although he was a solitary walker he was a companionable man, and in 1981 he married Kathleen Burton. Katie was to bring him more than domestic support. A doughty Yorkshire woman who had lived much of her life in Ceylon, she proved to be as enthusiastic a walker as John Hillaby himself, and from now on she accompanied him on his travels and appears as a cheerful, practical figure in several of his subsequent books.

These were *Journey Home* (1983); *John Hillaby's Yorkshire* (1986); *John Hillaby's London* (1987); and *Journey to the Gods* (1991), in which he returned to his earlier format with an account of his walk from Athens to Mount Olympus. His last book, *Hillaby's World: Adventures Across Three Continents* (1992), is a selection from his earlier writings, and makes available some of his more fugitive pieces.

In his books Hillaby was always able to strike the right balance between comments on the observed scene and his own participation in it. His personal ability invests the writing, but always humbly, and in spite of the extraordinary range of learning and knowledge to demonstrate. Archaeology, architecture, geology, climate, plant and animal life, philology, literature, music, and, always, his communication with wit, wisdom and originality. Curiously for somebody whose prose reads with such ease and grace, the act of writing came very hard to him, and the apparent spontaneity was the result of much sweat and torment at the desk.

Before any journey Hillaby would prepare his mind and his body with equal rigour; his mind by extensive research into the region he was about to visit (he was a familiar figure at the London Library where he had a genius for unearthing offbeat pieces from his chosen subject), and his body by punishing walks through the streets of London



Hillaby on the shores of Lake Rudolf, half way through his remarkable thousand-mile walk through Kenya

burdened with a deliberately overweighted backpack, which he constantly modified and adapted. The physical accoutrements of walking were important to him, and his practical advice to others is invaluable.

London was his home for many years, and he walked daily to Hampstead Heath, to which he was devoted. In his late sixties he was knocked down by a car outside Green Park underground station (the irony was not lost on him), and never fully recovered from his injuries, though he was able to resume his long walks.

He was instructed in York for the last four years of his life and there, towards the end, was afflicted by osteoarthritis of the spine, which rendered him practically immobile, struggling to walk as far as the corner of the street, a condition with which he found it hard to come to terms.

John Hillaby had an unobtrusive but committed religious belief, and at the same time was a man with a huge relish for life, gregarious, generous, and endlessly interested in everything. He was passionate about the natural world, and thrived to its diversity. Once, visiting Cuckmere Haven with him, I saw him ecstatic when he caught sight of a kingfisher plunging into tidal waters, something he had only heard about, half-disbelieving, but was now witnessing for himself. It was this sense of delighted wonder that he was able to convey to the world, directly as a companion as well as through his writings.

Douglas Matthews

John Hillaby, writer, naturalist and traveller; born 24 July 1917; married 1940 Eleanor Riley (marriage dissolved 1966; two daughters); 1966 Thelma Gordon (died 1972), 1981 Kathleen Burton; died York 19 October 1996.

Keith Boyce

Having produced the greatest cricketing all-rounder, Garfield Sobers, the West Indies have had difficulty in filling the mould. Most of their great batsmen can bowl a little, all their fast bowlers can swing the ball, but the genuine Test-class all-rounder has been rare, Collis King and Keith Boyce apart.

Much depends upon a boy's coaching. Boyce was a product of the famous Empire Club in Barbados. He arrived at the net as a leg-break bowler with a good defensive batting technique. His coaches soon spotted that he was happier bowling fast and hitting hard. "I like to hit the ball as far as I can," he was a Cricketer of the Year. "When it goes a long way it gives me a deep satisfaction".

When Trevor Bailey saw him appearing for Barbados against Cavaliers in 1965 he signed him as a fast bowler, not having seen his batting. Boyce spent two years qualifying for Essex, playing for the Second XI and Walthamstow, arriving just in time to turn Essex into a major power in the new Sunday

League, a form of cricket that might have been devised for him.

In his day he was a prodigious player, fast right arm bowler, a furious striker of the ball and a beautifully athletic fielder, deadly from almost any distance, running out a few famous names.

Adrenalin-fuelled, he was a volatile, excitable man, played up by his opponents. He had a few memorable clashes with Yorkshire: a plan was devised by his captain, Brian "Tonker" Taylor, to remove Geoffrey Boycott, who had scored 260 not out and 232 in the two preceding Championship games.

Once told to block out for a draw, Boyce responded by hitting an enormous six before being stumped yards out. His response to his captain's rolicking was: "I thought it would waste more time if I kept hitting it over the pavilion."

When all did go right for Boyce it was the opposition who suffered. He once went in to bat at 12.30 and scored a century (125) before lunch at 1.30. He was the first to 1,000 runs and 100 wickets in the Sunday League; Cambridge University met him on his debut, and he took 9-61; against Leicestershire, in 1973, he had figures of 113 and 12-73.

He played 21 times for the West Indies, touring England in 1973 and 1975, taking 19 wickets at an average of 15 in the three Tests of 1973. In the Prudential World Cup Final of 1975

was passed, David Baird recalled: "I don't know whether Dick was talking about Boyce, West Indians in general or even Chelmsford fish and chips, but Boyce was so mad he carried a picture of Dick around in his top pocket for two years."

Once told to block out for a draw, Boyce responded by hitting an enormous six before being stumped yards out. His response to his captain's rolicking was: "I thought it would waste more time if I kept hitting it over the pavilion."

When all did go right for Boyce it was the opposition who suffered. He once went in to bat at 12.30 and scored a century (125) before lunch at 1.30. He was the first to 1,000 runs and 100 wickets in the Sunday League; Cambridge University met him on his debut, and he took 9-61; against Leicestershire, in 1973, he had figures of 113 and 12-73.

He played 21 times for the West Indies, touring England in 1973 and 1975, taking 19 wickets at an average of 15 in the three Tests of 1973. In the Prudential World Cup Final of 1975

Boyce's versatility gave the West Indies the decisive edge over Australia. For Essex he scored almost 9,000 runs and took 852 wickets at an average of 25. Add his one-day career and his 215 first-class catches, his loss to Essex and cricket, after 12 summers in England, through injury at the age of 34, can be seen to have been enormous.

His return to Barbados was far from happy, his domestic difficulties including the loss of his house in a storm and the break-up of his marriage. He remained in touch with the game, coaching and organising a lottery in support of the Barbados Cricket Association, and was visiting a drugstore when he collapsed. He will be remembered with pride and affection in Essex, for he was one of the names who helped move that county from the backyard to the front room of county cricket.

Derek Hodgson

Keith David Boyce, cricketer; born St Peter, Barbados 11 October 1943; died married (two daughters); died Barbados 11 October 1996.



Boyce: a prodigious player, adrenalin-fuelled. Photograph: Hulton Getty

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

CASHMAN, Bertrand FRCS, on 17 October. Born Liverpool, Merseyside, his husband of 40 years, Peter, died in October. No flowers please. Donations to be directed to the Royal Society for the Blind, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £0.50 a unit (VAT extra)). OTHER: Gazette announcements, medical and legal notices, birth notices, marriages, deaths, anniversaries, obituaries and obituaries submitted in writing or faxed in are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £0.50 a unit (VAT extra)). OTHER: Gazette announcements, medical and legal notices, birth notices, marriages, deaths, anniversaries, obituaries and obituaries submitted in writing or faxed in are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Birthdays

Lord Birken, film producer, 66; Colleen John Blashford-Still, admiral, 68; Mr William Brewster, chairman, Covent Garden Market Authority, 64; Mr Louis Curtis, former principal, Birmingham School of Music; Mrs Barbara Craig, former principal of Somerville College, Oxford, 61; Miss Catherine Deneuve, film actress, 53; Professor Charlotte Erickson, historian, 73; Major Gen. Lord Michael Fitzalan-Howard, St. Michael St. Giles, Queen's Head, 68; Miss Joan Fontaine, film actress, 86; Mr Mike Hendrick, cricketer, 48; Sir Michael Huron, chairman, Post Office, 62; Mrs Irene Hindmarsh, former principal, Aldan's College, Durham, 73; Sir Derek Jacobi, actor, 55; Mrs Dorothy Leesing, novelist, 72; Mr Donald McIntyre, operatic bass singer, 62; Mr Kelvin MacKenzie, managing director, British Sky Broadcasting, 50; Mr Robert Rauschenberg, pop artist, 71; Mr James Sharpe, chief constable of Merseyside, 53; Mr Michael Stoute, racehorse trainer, 51; Vice-Admiral Sir FitzRoy Talbot, 87; Mr Arthur Thatcher, former Director of Censuses, 70; Admiral Sir Hugo White, Governor of Gibraltar, 57; Admiral Sir David Williams, former Governor of Gibraltar, 75; Professor Sir David Williams, former Vice-Chancellor, Cambridge University, 66; Professor John Wing, psychiatrist, 75.

Anniversaries

Births: Franz Liszt, composer, 1811; Stephen Moulton Babcock, agricultural chemist, 1843; Sarah Bernhardt (Irene-Rosine-Bernard), actress, 1844; Lord Alfred Bruce, M. Radcliffe, High Sheriff of Hampshire, 1861.

Douglas, poet, 1870; Deafus Thomas Sheraton, cabinet-maker, 1890; Henry Richard Vassall Fox, third Baron Holland, author and statesman, 1840; Paul Cézanne, painter, 1906; Edward John Burne-Jones, painter, 1907; Pablo Casals, cellist, 1973; Arnold Toynbee, historian, 1975; Nuala J. Quinn, boulangier, music teacher, conductor and composer, 1978. On this day: *Tristia* was first published, 1831; in New York, the Metropolitan Opera House opened, 1883; Don Juan Carter of Bourbaki was proclaimed King of Spain, 1875; Today is the Feast Day of St Alpharius, St Donatus of Fiesole, St Mel of Malonne, Saints Nunilo and Alodia and St Philip of Heraclia and his Companions.

Lectures: National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Male Nudes" (6); Robert's *The Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, 1pm. National Portrait Gallery (to mark Falstaff Day): John Wolpole Reilly, "Singing Nelson's Praise", 1.10pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Irene Logar, "Art and design of the Baroque", 2.30pm.

Dinners

HMS Victory: Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, presided at a Trafalgar Night dinner held yesterday evening on board his flagship HMS *Victory* in Portsmouth Naval Base. Among those present were Sir Roy Macdaren, High Commissioner for Canada, The Right Rev Dr K.W. Stevenson, Bishop of Portsmouth, Mr M. Radcliffe, High Sheriff of Hampshire, General Charles Cruk, Commandant, US Marine Corps, and Air Marshal Sir David Cousins.

Practice Direction (Judges in Chambers; Amended Procedure); Queen's Bench Division (Lord Bishop of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice) 15 October 1996

To expedite hearings of summonses and appeals by the Queen's Bench judge in chambers, the existing procedure (see Practice Direction (Judge in Chambers; Amended Procedure) [1989] 1 WLR 359) has been reorganised as follows.

1. All inter partes applications and appeals to the judge before hearing such applications and appeals, the parties must be listed in a general list.

2. To ensure a complete set of papers in proper order is available for the judge before hearing such applications and appeals, the parties must be listed in a general list. They will be listed for hearing in Room E101 or some other room at the Royal Courts of Justice on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

3. To expedite hearings of summonses and appeals by the Queen's Bench judge in chambers, the existing procedure (see Practice Direction (Judge in Chambers; Amended Procedure) [1989] 1 WLR 359) has been reorganised as follows.

4. Except with leave of the judge, no document may be adduced in evidence or relied on unless a copy of it has been lodged and the original produced.

5. To expedite hearings of summonses and appeals by the Queen's Bench judge in chambers, the existing procedure (see Practice Direction (Judge in Chambers; Amended Procedure) [1989] 1 WLR 359) has been reorganised as follows.

6. To expedite hearings of summonses and appeals by the Queen's Bench judge in chambers, the existing procedure (see Practice Direction (Judge in Chambers; Amended Procedure) [1989] 1 WLR 359) has been reorganised as follows.

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Build a moral society, but a liberal one

Out of tragedy emerges an activist. Frances Lawrence would never have made her public plea for a more moral society had her husband Philip not been stabbed to death by a teenager. Or at least if she had, the country would not have listened. Likewise the Dunblane parents would never have supported such a determined campaign against handguns had Thomas Hamilton not murdered their children. Theirs is a valiant attempt to create meaning and purpose out of horrific events and we should applaud them for it.

But the very fact that these movements are emerging in response to emotive but isolated incidents is enough to make many people suspicious. After all, were it not for the front-page headlines day after day on the violence of Dunblane and the death of Mr Lawrence, we wouldn't be listening to Mrs Lawrence or supporting the Snowdrop petition against guns.

However, just because something is driven by emotion doesn't make it wrong. Too much emotion is not the weakness in this nascent moral majority. That, surely, is one of the ways in which representative democracy works. Far more troubling is the possibility that in the short term the hand-wringing will have no impact at all on the real problems in the country, and in the longer term could deteriorate into hostility and intolerance towards people who resist its more sweeping admonitions.

When making laws and judgements, we need to distinguish between synthetic hysteria fuelled by media hype and genuine deep-rooted public desire for change.

Emotional reactions to news reporting can indeed make us irrational. Fear and anxiety for the safety of our children makes many parents over-cautious about letting their offspring go out alone, despite the fact that they are no more at risk from dangerous strangers today than they were 20 years ago. Media hype and public panic is stopping young children properly developing a sense of independence and responsibility.

So yes, we should be cautious and tread carefully in our search for authenticity. Exaggerated fears and emotions should not be the basis for moral judgements and public policy.

However, sometimes it takes a tragedy to raise support for a very sensible campaign. In the US it took the shooting of a president, and a public campaign by the man who was caught in the crossfire, Jim Brady, to build enough political support for new restrictions on gun ownership. No matter how much the general public might have believed in it before, it took a human drama to mobilise enough grassroots support to defeat the powerful gun lobby.

Likewise in Britain, most of us would always have agreed that hand guns should be kept out of the home, but it took a tragedy to get us angry enough

to bounce the Government into the right action.

Similarly Mrs Lawrence and the public figures who jumped on her bandwagon yesterday are right to call for the re-moralising of society. A selfish nation of atomised individuals is indeed an immoral place to be. The Catholic Church has said as much this week. John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown have all concurred, in different ways.

But uniting all those who already believe that their children should be inculcated with a sense of social responsibility won't have much impact on the lives of teenagers like Learo Chindamo, the youth who stabbed Mr Lawrence. Nor will appealing for children to read books rather than watch telly help those troubled violent young people who never properly learned to read.

Re-moralising society is pointless if "society" really means the articulate middle-class "New Victorians" who already instinctively agree with and adhere to every precept. It is pointless if people in trouble and causing trouble are not a part of mainstream society in the first place. An effective grassroots moral campaign will be one that reaches out to those who are excluded and alienated, not one that just fuels the resentment and outrage of insiders.

In fact it would be a campaign that built on the achievements of Philip Lawrence, a headmaster who tried to instil ethics and hope in troubled teenagers, rather than on the empty proselytising of some politicians. Remoralising the majority to persuade them willingly to give more through taxation or, even better, through their personal time, to help solve social problems would be a great achievement indeed.

Even more troubling, when this growing moral majority realises that its hand-wringing is ineffective, it is likely to become increasingly intolerant of the people it failed to help and failed to reach. The illiberal elements are already in place. Calls for strong two-parent families can easily degenerate into condemnation of other family arrangements, no matter how successful and loving these may be. Tony Blair was worryingly hesitant when asked for his views on gay couples with children.

Frances Lawrence was right to speak

out, just as the Dunblane parents were right to channel their energy into the Snowdrop campaign. They speak with far more moral authority than politicians these days, and their voices deserve to be heard. But we should be careful how we in the public, politics and media react to the stories they tell. We should not be striving for a society that indulges in blanket condemnation on the basis of prejudice. We need a more moral and less violent country. But we want to live in a liberal land as well.

The politics of prayer

Meanwhile, still on the subject of our moral fabric... We are not impressed by the rush of politicians (Major, Blair, Redwood *et al*) to emphasise their religiosity and the frequency with which they pray. There is more than a hint of Christopher Robinism about it: "Hush, hush, whisper who dares, powerful gentlemen are saying their prayers." This is not the British way. We suspect that the stronger the conviction, the less flaunted it will be. In club houses and homes the maxim about not discussing politics or religion is adhered to. Now, no newspaper editorialist would go along with that. But we are against discussing both in the same breath.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Guns: if the mental safety catch fails

Sir: Gun clubs are where one learns to shoot, whatever use that skill may be put to; and there are powerful unconscious forces at work when a man chooses handgun shooting as his sport and these forces remain when mental illness supervenes, without the safety catch provided by reason, prudence and conscience. The Government would be wise to ban such guns, even if it means depriving innocent citizens who find an outlet for their instincts in shooting for sport.

One remembers the story of Hermann Goering arriving late and dressed for the field at a dinner given by our ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps. When Goering apologised with the explanation that he had been out shooting, the ambassador is said to have replied: "Animals, I hope, Herr Reichsmarschall."

I note that the targets on shooting ranges are usually human representations.

Professor JOHN A. DAVIS
Cambridge

Sir: Your editorial ("Ban all handguns now. There's nothing to lose", 17 October) stretches historical fact somewhat. Most previous legislation was not to ban ownership of guns generally, but to restrict easy access to the "right" people so that in the event of insurrection the supporters of the Establishment would be the ones with access.

In Victorian times, the sale of pocket pistols and guns for personal and home protection was probably at its highest, and Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson seem to have had no problem of purchase or retention. Prior to that Mr Marion was selling his superbly designed and manufactured duelling pistols, now to be banned for target shooting, and officers in the forces were expected to supply their own.

The 1826 Act was rushed through by a government fearful of a Bolshevik revolution, and again was intended to disarm the "common people". When the threat of invasion came with the Second World War we had to run to the United States with a begging bowl to arm the Home Defence Forces.

After the war, many of these guns, given by individuals to help fight for democracy, were scrapped by a government once again apparently fearful of its own population's responsibility.

We do not have a "gun culture"

here – no one may carry or use a pistol for personal protection or home defence, and if drug dealers and other criminals are becoming more attracted to firearms, this has no bearing on legal owners.

PETER GILLET
Farnborough, Hampshire

Sir: Tom Benn ("The answer to the British Question is British withdrawal", 9 October) and Harry Nesbitt ("Letters", 14 October) seem to be the only ones that in stays in Northern Ireland see a threat of a pogrom.

Catholics if we withdraw, is the exact opposite of what normally told by politicians in will not give in to threats of violence".

is solution is that we are, but before doing the steps to prevent a Catholic. The

from the relatively arms held illegally orists, but from ms legally owned



Michael Heath's New York

All change over Hawk exports

Sir: The Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, told Parliament during the defence estimates debate on 14 October: "I have no evidence that Hawk aircraft have been used against the population of Indonesia" (*Hansard*, 14 October, col 479).

The Defence Secretary should refer to the evidence of the Prime Minister to the Scott Inquiry, given orally on 17 January 1994. There he will find clear reasons why he should not be so complacent about the sale of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia.

John Major told Lord Justice Scott: "The Hawk trainer, as the Hawk trainer, was non-lethal [referring to prospective sale to Iraq]." But "the Hawk trainer, as altered, to use chemical weapons, would certainly have been lethal, and I think the view I took at the time was that it was far too high a risk with the particular regime in Iraq, that that might happen. So I [as Foreign Secretary] was not at all keen on the Hawk being sold." (*Transcript Day 55*, pages 24-25.)

The reason Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta won the Nobel Peace Prize for fighting against Indonesian government repression in East Timor underlines the belief by independent authorities that they have had a real – and brave – cause to fight.

No doubt Indonesia's military could convert trainer Hawks to

offensive combat aircraft as efficiently as Mr Major feared Saddam Hussein's brutal regime would do in Iraq to indulge in similar repression of minority peoples such as the East Timorese.

Mr Portillo should take the lead from Mr Major, not the blinkered lobby of the arms salesmen over Hawk.

LLEW SMITH MP
(Blaenau Gwent, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW1

Adriatic bathing still pure delight

Sir: I like Mrs Bertram of Cambridge (letter, 16 October), was born and brought up in Trieste, Italy – unlike Mrs Bertram, I and my family still go there every summer to enjoy good healthy swimming.

The bacterial content of the sea water is measured every day, published in the local paper and announced on the local radio – no one as far as I know has ever become ill after swimming in the Gulf of Trieste.

In the northern part of the Adriatic the sea is clean and healthy and it supports a lot of sea life.

In Trieste we have a WWF marine reserve. Grado, only a few miles away, has the record of the cleanest sea in Italy.

MARIA FAVENTO MILLARD
Rome, Italy

Assessing the risks of war

Sir: Peter Hennessy ("The Secret Service, Open to Question", 15 October) is curiously old-fashioned in his approach to intelligence.

The most serious threats faced by this country and our allies over the next decades will almost certainly be the consequence of conflict due to rising ethnic and religious tensions and – as split out in your special supplement on the same day – overpopulation, poverty and breakdown of essential ecological support systems.

These are almost completely ignored as "too difficult" by the Whittlehall intelligence machinery. Hence the proposal which a number of us have been making for the creation of a non-military global risk assessment unit in the Cabinet Office.

This would focus broader-based international threat assessment within government, while also publishing regular reports to inform public opinion. The cost would be very small, about £1m to £2m a year.

Peter Hennessy may also like to ponder Fukuyama's argument in *The End of History* that the best deterrent to wars in the post-Cold War world is the promotion of democracy worldwide, not better spying.

JOHN GORDON
London N6

The writer is a former member of the diplomatic service

Happy birthday Adam, age 6,000

Sir: Adam's 6,000th birthday falls tomorrow. John Lightfoot, who was vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, built on the genealogical scholarship of

Archbishop James Ussher (*Sacred Chronology*, 1620) and concluded that Adam was created at 9am on Sunday 23 October, 4004 BC. Perhaps *The Independent* would like to mark this anniversary with a front-page reproduction of God zapping Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Adam's children are clearly getting better informed. We should celebrate 23 October perennially as Science Day.

DAVID MANSFIELD
Lochwinnoch,
Renfrewshire

Early skateboard

Sir: I read that Andrew Baker, and perhaps many of your readers, are interested to know of the earliest skateboard ("On the Boards", Magazine 19 October).

It seemed to me when I arrived in London in 1950 that the skateboard, albeit in a primitive state, was already in general use by boys from nine to 15 or so. It consisted of a short plank with two cross-pieces nailed to it. On the four ends of the cross-pieces were fixed ball or roller bearings discarded from old cars etc.

These contrivances made an ungodly racket as they were propelled down the pavements by their young owners.

MARTIN MOTTRAM
Salisbury, Wiltshire

Duress a defence for jailed witness

Sir: The decision of a judge to jail a victim of violent crime because she was too terrified to testify in a case against her alleged assailant ("Woman jailed for contempt will appeal", 19 October) is plainly ridiculous. It is also legally questionable.

In an earlier case with strikingly similar facts – *R v Hudson and Taylor* [1971] 2 QB 202 – the Court of Appeal confirmed that duress is a defence to virtually all crimes. It is certainly a defence to a charge of contempt of court, for which Sarah Holt and another female witness were jailed last week. It should have been obvious to the trial judge that the silence of the women resulted from terror not from perversity or contempt.

Official figures released last month show that violent crime rose by 10 per cent to 331,000 offences in the year to June, the largest rise for eight years. Multifarious policies might feature in any intelligent discussion about how to deal with this social menace, but jailing intimidated victims is not among them.

DR GARY SLAPPER
The Law School,
Staffordshire University
Stoke-on-Trent

What Wigan worries about

Sir: I read Polly Toynbee's piece on the Tories in Bournemouth ("Schism, here we come!", 11 October) with wry amusement. I'm afraid she got herself into a muddle.

Wigan people certainly don't believe that Europe is the only political issue. As I told Polly, their big worry is crime – especially the thuggery, car crime and vandalism that spoils life in many towns. Wiganers are delighted that the Conservatives are meeting these worries with "zero tolerance".

Describing Wigan as a "no hope seat" also shows a touch of Home Counties snobbery. Wigan is full of hope. Tourism, golf courses, retail parks, computer centres and ever-expanding executive housing estates – Wigan's got them all. Now that really is something that Miss Toynbee should get excited about.

MARK LOVEDAY
Conservative prospective
parliamentary candidate for Wigan
Wigan, Lancashire

Maltese orphans

Sir: R G J M Earl (Letters, 25 September) alleges that when in Malta during the war, "the late Dr Boni showed me an orphanage which he assured me was reserved solely for the children of priests". There has never been such an orphanage. Your correspondent's allegation is completely unfounded. It definitely does not do justice to the orphanages set up and run by priests with great sacrifice and dedication.

C BUTTIGIEG
Public Relations Officer
Archbishop's Curia
Floriana, Malta

Going for gold

Sir: Why is it a dreadful thing to seek to buy an individual MP for a few hundred pounds but a jolly exciting innovation to seek to buy a whole new political party for a few million pounds?

TOM SARGENT
Bolton, West Lancashire

essay

After 20 years in Britain, Bill Bryson finds himself mystified by an America consumed by anger and envy – yet strangely indifferent to this year's presidential campaign



I don't understand my country

— Hanover, New Hampshire
Tom Wicker, the former *New York Times* columnist and a thoughtful and perceptive analyst of American affairs, recently spoke at the local college here and I went along to hear him. I went because I had been asked to divine the mood of the electorate, and I was hoping to appropriate some of his thoughts on the matter, not having found any myself.

Wicker has been closely watching American elections for more than half a century and he said that he had never seen one quite as irrelevant, as inattentive to the real issues, as this one.

He was, of course, quite right. You would scarcely guess from this election campaign that America has some serious problems—indeed, pretty much leads the developed world—with regard to issues of race, violent crime, homelessness, economic disparities, imprisonment, illiteracy, health care, low savings rates, and a great deal else.

Wicker talked a little about several of these matters, but didn't really touch on anything you could call a mood. He appeared to be a Clinton man, but listlessly.

That same night I had dinner

with some wealthy Republicans who conceded, after a couple of bottles of Medoc, that they didn't have any real fondness for Dole, didn't for a moment believe he could deliver his vaunted 16 per cent cut without unsettling the economy, and didn't for a moment think he did either. They would vote for him, but listlessly.

And so it has been nearly everywhere. If there is an American out there with anything approaching a strong feeling about either candidate, I have yet to find him. Even Bob Dole, who has the pleasingly disconcerting habit of referring to himself in the third person, as if he isn't actually there, often seems as if, well, he isn't actually there. It is striking that the longer the campaign goes on without any kind of hopeful signs for Dole, the happier he looks.

This is not perhaps such a bad thing. The election campaign could have been more interesting, to be sure, but it also could have been a lot more scary. To begin with, the Republican nominee could very well have been Pat Buchanan—a man who, let us never forget, once described Adolf Hitler as "an individual of great courage [and] extraordinary gifts", characterised Aids as a form of natural retribution for unnatural

acts, and praised South Africa under apartheid as "an outpost of Western empire and Western civilisation". Here is a man, in short, who sounds as if his speeches ought to be delivered by torchlight.

Buchanan won the New Hampshire primary. He could easily have gone all the way. If Bob Dole does nothing else—and often in this campaign, that has appeared to be his strategy—he has saved his party and the rest of the world from the unnerving prospect of Pat Buchanan as the Republican nominee for president.

All of this is good news for the irrepressible Bill Clinton. What an extraordinary politician. This is a man among whose lesser problems—is that he stands accused of having deprived one Paula Jones of her civil rights by asking her for oral sex in a Little Rock hotel room in 1991.

Surely there has never been a luckier man. He is lucky that the American media don't know what to do—literally paralysed with uncertainty—when the words "President of the United States" and "genitalia" threaten to find some sort of natural proximity. He is lucky with the economy, which is positively rosy. He is lucky beyond belief.

Most of these books are dull, weighty, and dreadfully earnest, and they sell in vast numbers. What is notable about them is that nearly all were begun at a time when Newt Gingrich, the House speaker, was the most popular politician in the United States and published at a time when he was the most despised—a remarkable turnaround unforeseen by no one. The fact is that politics in America is so wildly erratic these days

that Dole has not blasted away at his doughy character. He is even lucky that the jokes of TV chat show people are so incredibly harmless and lame.

Here, for instance, is David Letterman on the news that the White House had improperly examined FBI files on 340 people: "They're saying the whole thing is a mistake. They say... it was a typographical error. Clinton was out ordering more files, Clinton was ordering more files."

That is impossible to say what is happening.

How do you explain, for instance, in a nation so powerfully rooted to fundamental values like godliness, patriotism, moral probity, and family fealty that the electorate is about to reject a solid, conservative, war-happy Republican in favour of a sick Democrat with a roving eye and elastic scruples?

No wonder people are confused. And, as often with confused people, they are angry. Americans are angry about everything and nothing. I have never known a period of such peevishness in my native land. Resentment has become the guiding sentiment for millions, "zero tolerance" the watchword. If there is the slightest chance that anyone anywhere has enjoyed a privilege not enjoyed or appreciated by, say, a factory worker in Skokie, Illinois, you can be sure that that privilege has recently been revoked.

Consider Pell grants. In 1994, Californians voted overwhelmingly for a bill called Proposition 187, designed to deny health and education services to illegal immigrants and their children. Governor Pete Wilson, the man behind the proposition (and who, according to *The Los Angeles Times*, may once have employed an illegal immigrant, made himself), immediately directed state health authorities to stop providing pre-natal care to illegal immigrants—in effect, told undocumented immigrant women to go and have their babies on park benches. (The proposition has since been stalled in the courts.)

In the second Presidential debate, Bob Dole said, "This is America. No one is going to go without food or health care." Actually that is not so. President Clinton just last month signed a bill denying Medicaid benefits even to legal immigrants.

Consider the poor, who receive only 12 per cent of total discretionary spending in

America, but are being required to absorb 60 per cent of the latest round of federal budget cuts. I could go on and on—about affirmative action programmes, about funding for inner cities, about welfare.

I can't pretend to guess what goes on in people's heads these days—whether they think the less privileged have been given an unfair leg-up and that it's time to level the playing field, whether they are so angry that they simply want somebody else to suffer for a while, whether they think these changes will really bring solutions rather than just much greater problems later.

One factor that makes this scatter-gunned hostility more interesting, more perplexing, and indubitably more American is that it is frequently accompanied by a large dose of paranoia. People have taken to seeing conspiracies in almost everything. In Tennessee, for instance, religious fundamentalists are endeavouring to give the teaching of creationism equal standing with the teaching of evolution in state schools (proving yet again that the danger for Tennesseeans is not so much that they may be descended from apes as overtaken by them).

The striking thing about the debate there is that most creationists don't merely believe that the evolutionists are wrong, the victims of a sincere but misguided attachment to Darwinian theory, but that they are engaged in a manipulative, large-scale, carefully orchestrated campaign to subvert the word of God. It is not enough, you see, that your opponents might disagree with you. They must be out to get you. All over the country there are well-armed groups of survivalists who have no doubt that the United States government has become the tool of a sinister but

amorphous entity known by Buchanan adherents as the New World Order, and that it is only a matter of time before we are engaged in civil war.

In California, meanwhile, up to 2,000 people took to the streets to demonstrate recently after a rumour swept through the black community that the CIA had introduced crack cocaine to the streets of south-central Los Angeles in the early Eighties as a way of funding Nicaraguan Contra rebels while simultaneously keeping blacks in a deprived and vulnerable state. "Even though there is no conclusive evidence the story... is true," wrote *The Boston Globe*, "blacks here said they almost unanimously believe it."

This is, in a word, a seriously polarised nation with a quite astonishing array of simmering problems.

However, let us not lose perspective. America has been for a very long time a seriously polarised nation with a quite astonishing array of simmering problems, and it hasn't fallen apart yet. It remains the wealthiest and most productive nation on earth and, whatever the common perceptions may be, it is getting wealthier all the time. In the past decade alone the economy expanded by 28 per cent. If the country is failing to deal generously or imaginatively with its ills, it isn't because it is worse off than it was 10 years ago.

So why, if people feel so strongly about so much, are they so indifferent to the campaign? I wish I could tell you.

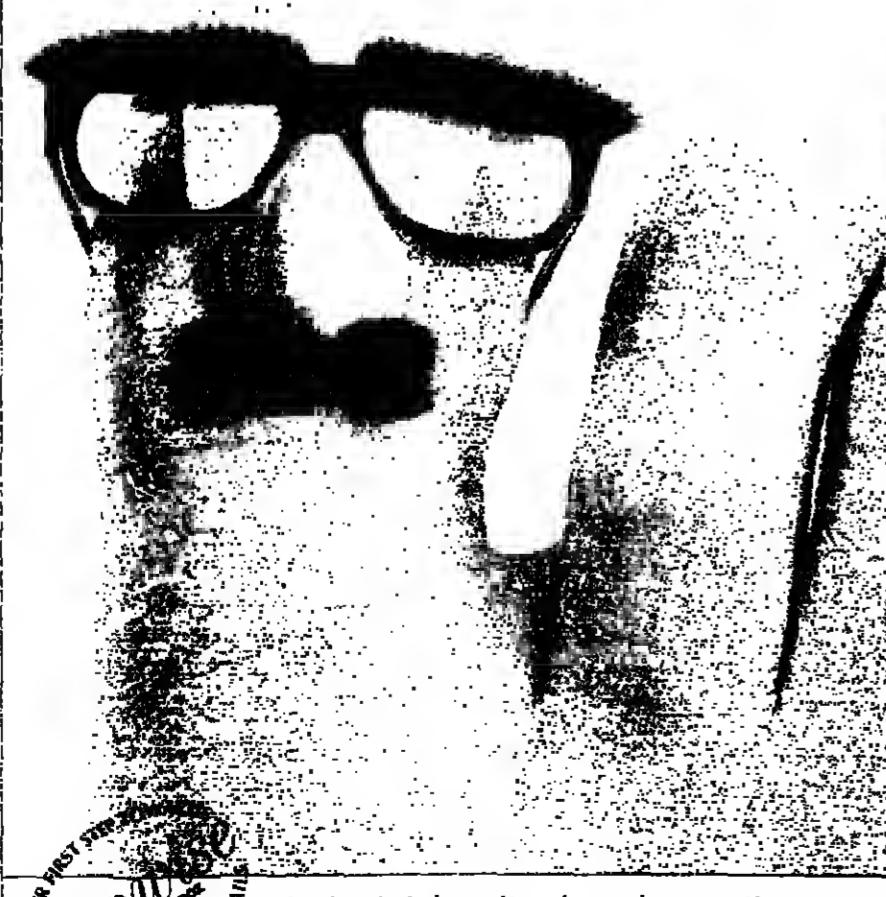
This is my first election in 20 years, and things have changed beyond my ability to understand them. When I left America in the Seventies, the country was just emerging from a lively and impassioned decade. Camper vans were full of hippies; often they demonstrated. The war in Vietnam, civil rights, Kent State, Watergate—all these were still in the air. There was a sense of being on the edge of a period of momentous change.

All that has vanished. Now, even at an elite eastern university such as Dartmouth, here in Hanover, the students nearly all look as if they're on their way to an Osmonds concert and seem unconcerned by thoughts of a wider, more troubled world. It is as if the nation's problems have plodded inexorably onwards while the inhabitants have scampered backwards towards a safer, simpler age.

That's one thing you have to like about Bill Clinton. He appears to be almost the only person in America who is genuinely looking forward to the new millennium.

And here's an interesting consideration. Assuming Clinton wins, it will be the first time in his career that he will not be thinking about re-election. Since he cannot stand again, it is entirely probable that his thoughts will turn to posterity. A Bill Clinton who is able to focus his abundant energies and intelligence on his legacy rather than his next campaign might just be an impressive sight. It will certainly be worth watching.

There's no disguising problem toenails



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FREEPHONE 0800 200 210

The funny thing about a good parody...



Miles Kington

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree;
In fact, until the billboards
fall,
I'll never see a tree at all.

So wrote Ogden Nash, in a verse that caught my attention when I was a teenager, for at least three reasons.

First, I didn't know what

Second, I didn't realise till that moment that not all Americans were mad keeo for Americanisation, and that some preferred trees to posters. Later I was to discover Americans who even preferred real cooking to McDonald's hamburgers.

Third, it was obvious that Nash was parodying some well-known verse when he said "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree...".

It was a poem that I had never come across. Yet in a way that didn't really matter. It is one of the strange properties of good parody that you can deduce from it what the original was like even if you have never read it.

My father, for instance, was in the habit of declaiming pieces of parody which I found funny even though I had no idea what the original was, such as the one that started:

It was Christmas Day in the mortuary.
The coldest day in the year,
When a corpse sat up and suddenly said,
It's bloody cold in here!
In then came the mortuary-keeper,

His face all a-flame with beer,
Took one look at him and said,

You can't do that there 'crel

It wasn't till years later that I realised that this was a parody of all those tearful ballads with titles like, "It was Christmas Day in the Workhouse", but even at the age of eight or nine I knew that my father hadn't made it up, and that whoever he had got it from hadn't made it up, and that somewhere there was an Urtext.

Similarly, when my father declaimed:

The boy stood on the burning deck,

His pockets full of bombs,

When one went off, the lot went off

And left him in his cors

I knew that he had left a lot unspoken there. First of all, I didn't know what cors were, and my father had to explain painstakingly that

combinations were another name for long johns. Then, because nobody in our house had any long johns, he had to explain painstakingly the nature and purpose of long underwear. After which he had to explain that there was a very sad poem which began:

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled

The flame lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead

Explaining parodies to me usually took longer than reciting them, which may be why he gave up explaining them after a while. For instance, he never explained to me the origin of another parody which he used to happily produce when I was off to school again:

There is a happy land, far far away

Where they have harn and eggs.

Three times a day.

Oh how those boys do yell

When they hear the breakfast bell!

Oh those eggs do smell

Three times a day!

I think it may be based on

a hymn of the same opening line, but I never sang that hymn in my church-going days, so I am not likely to now. No matter. Now that my father is dead, and I am an orphan, I have lately started looking up the sources of his parodies, and have discovered that Mrs Hemans, who wrote "The

Boy Stood on the Burning Deck" also wrote the poem that starts "The stately homes of England". I have also discovered from an old Oxford Dictionary of Quotations that it was Joyce Kilmer (1888-1918) who wrote "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree" though I have not the faintest idea who Joyce Kilmer was or what else she did in her short life.

In fact, when I sat down this morning I had no intention of saying anything about poetry and parody. It was billboards I wanted to talk about. Especially one billboard I saw last week. I happened to have to drive across England and back which meant I was exposed to a wider selection of posters than usual, and kept seeing one which began, in big letters, something like this:

"Alexander the Great already coquered by the age of 25 Europe compare note..."

"tomorrow, he could tell you on that one ad... I don't mind

worries me w that that this

is one ad... I don't mind

worries me w that that this

is one ad... I don't mind

worries me w that that this

is one ad... I don't mind

worries me w that that this

is one ad... I don't mind

worries me w that that this

is one ad... I don't mind

Fear of Germany drives the Goldsmith gang

We can, at least, rehabilitate Arthur Balfour. The millionaire zoo keeper and eugenicist John Aspinall committed a gross injustice to poor old Balfour in his bizarre speech to the Referendum Party conference at the weekend. It went unnoticed among the more eye-catching passages, worthy of the old League of Empire Loyalists, about the nature of true English stock. But "Aspers" claimed that Balfour had said that on the issue of tariff reform he would rather consult his valet than the British people. What Balfour actually said was that he would rather consult his valet than the Conservative Party conference. A very different – and much more admirable – sentiment.

It's an interesting mistake, because it helped to reinforce the party's pitch that most professional politicians are contemptible elitists and that it is Sir James Goldsmith who is a true man of the people. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Sir James's own speech, in which he put himself proudly at the head of a popular army ready to fight for the liberation of the "peoples of Europe" from the yoke of Eurotyranny. In doing so, Sir James spent quite a lot of time dissecting the anti-democratic contempt of Hegel, whom he called "the philosophical father of the German constitutional tradition". Hegel, he implied, would have been well pleased with the German-dominated EU. Indeed, the conference was heavily laden with phobia, real or pretended, about Germany's astavistic goal of dominating Europe once again – and France's weakness in "collaborating" with it.

This matters, less because it may help to give Sir James a few thousand more votes on polling day, but because it exposes, in extreme and eccentric form, the contradictions in British attitudes – mainly, but not exclusively, on the right – to Germany and its modern political class. After all, even the ravings of "Aspers" look less interminably when you consider that the late Nicholas Ridley, in the *Spectator* interview which triggered his fall from the Cabinet, said not only that the single currency was a "German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe", but in answer to the question of whether Helmut Kohl was not preferable to Adolf Hitler, replied: "I am not sure I wouldn't rather have the dictators and the chance to fight back than simply be taken over by economics." The vocabulary of Euro-sceptics – sometimes in public, but more frequently in private – is still laced with satirical imagery of this kind.

What's wearisome about this demonic model of German domination through the EU is that it is usually used by politicians who are intelligent enough to know that Helmut Kohl's purpose, since he became a committed European in his teens, has been precisely the opposite. That doesn't in itself make European integration right for Germany, any more than



Donald Macintyre

Sir James's Referendum Party friends let slip a secret obsession that blinds them to European realities

the argument that a closely integrated EU was needed "to tie down Gulliver".

What's much less obvious is what the current Kohl-bashing Euro-sceptics think about a reunified Germany in a much looser EU, or in no EU at all. Do they buy the doubtful proposition that in the long term, Germany, as a now mature democracy, would be less rather than more of an economic threat? Or do some of them believe that Kohl's determination to lock Bonn into the EU reflects a now obsolete sense of guile about the war, and rather thrill to the prospect of a reunified Germany free-standing as a proud nation state, unshackled by the rest of Europe?

As it happens, I would not put this latter view past some of the international and polyglot followers of Sir James or even some Tory individualists like Alan Clark. But it looks as though many Euro-sceptics haven't really thought about it at all.

Which is part of the problem. The future of Germany dominates every item, every nuance of Britain's agonies over the EU. Yet it remains the least seriously or rationally debated issue in British foreign policy. John Major made a brave attempt in his "heart of Europe" speech in 1991 to provide a context for better Anglo-German understanding. Since then there has been very little, at least from him. As his predecessor pointed out, there's a tendency to see what she insisted on calling the "German problem" as "something too delicate for well-brought-up politicians to discuss. This always seemed to me a mistake."

Amen at least to that.

God meets the Old Devil

A memorial service for an atheist? Andrew Brown understands

"I'm an atheist, yes. But it's more that I hate Him" said Kingsley Amis, explaining his view of God to Yevgeni Yevushenko. The story is in his memoirs and it is given added piquancy by the fact that the novelist's work will be remembered at a service in St Martin's in the Fields in London this afternoon. Of all the people for the Church of England to commemorate, a man who boasts in his memoirs of hating God, and who wrote with extraordinary lucidity and savagery of his reasons for this hatred, ought perhaps to be fairly low down on the list of priorities. Yet perhaps it makes sense.

One reason for such a service lies in the deep respect that parts of the Church of England have for art, and especially for literature. Hardy and Housman both have their memorials in Westminster Abbey. Both were fairly dedicated enemies of religion: "Keep who will, and keep who can, these alien laws of God and man" wrote Housman. There is no trace of Christian hope or fear in his poems. He sees no damnation, only death.

Amis, who admired Housman, surpassed him, I think, in the detailed savagery of his detestation of God. There is something high-pitched and rhetorical about Housman. Even – especially – his restraint shows off. But Amis can manage the ordinary everyday unglamorous hatred of God, woven into the fabric of existence, alongside boredom and fear. Nowhere is this better done than in *The Green Man*, a ghost story in which Maurice Allingham, the alcoholic landlord of an ancient pub, becomes possessed by the spirit of an earlier owner, an Elizabethan alchemist and black magician. There's little supernatural activity in the book, and all of it, in the CIA phrase, deniable. "You're a good security risk," God explains to Maurice at one stage. "What, You mean drunk and off my head and seeing things?" "Yes."

But the conversation the two men have, however deniable, has a terribly authentic ring. In the living room above the pub, in the long dead hours of an afternoon on licensed premises, God appears as a young man, well dressed, if anything a little too sleek. He only slips out of this character occasionally, when Maurice refills His

whisky, and bones clink against the glass. "You didn't have to do that," says Maurice, the sort of hypochondriac whose fear of illness cannot diminish or make manageable his terror of death. The young man replies that he did have to. Maurice must not, in their pleasantries, forget Who or What He really is. Yet for the most part, God is



Kingsley Amis on God: 'I hate him'

charming, if a little world-weary. You can't imagine, he says, how difficult it is to resist the temptation to miracles – even a small one: a dinosaur appearing in the middle of the rush-hour traffic in Piccadilly Circus. But there are the rules of the game – the rules of the game, old man, as He explains when asked what to do about the suffering of children or of animals. This is grotesque in its manner.

In its matter, it is just about perfectly orthodox. Of course, Amis's God cuts out all the guff about suffering being for the good of the sufferer, but so do most modern theologians.

They, too, explain it as part of the "rules of the game": God, it appears, could not make creatures who could freely love Him

Why is Black Rod the only black here?

by Ian Hamilton

The Silly Season is upon us. England is opening its Parliament tomorrow. If someone would give the English the gift to see their posturings as others see them, then perhaps they might realise how silly their annual state occupation of the telly has become.

They are not a stupid nation. It may simply never have occurred to them that their ancient ceremonies are driving a wedge between the rulers and the ruled. England is now a multiracial nation, but you wouldn't think so to watch their ceremonial. The ancient rituals of India or Pakistan play no part, to take but two nations of those whose people are now the heart of England.

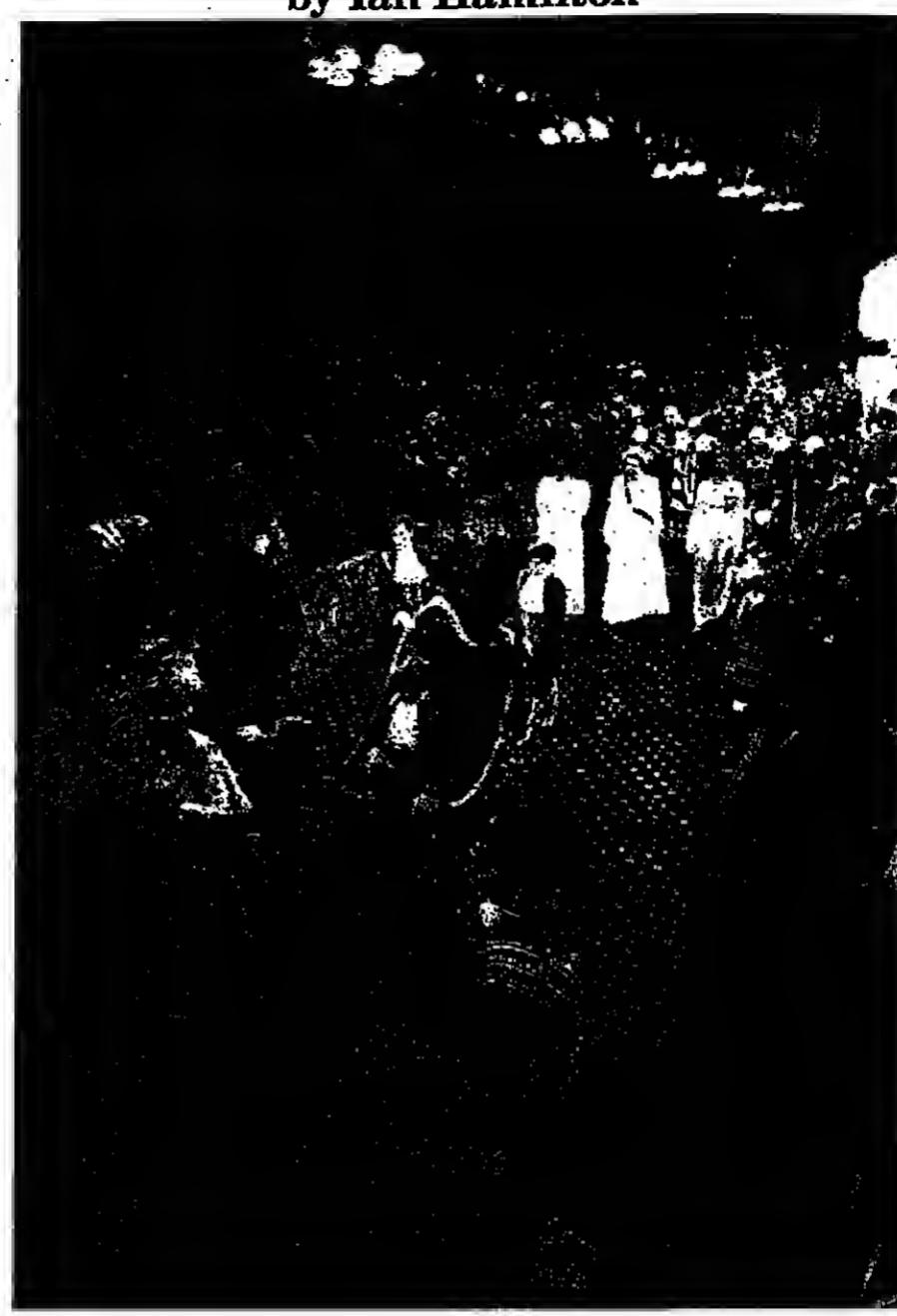
Official England considers the traditions of no other ethnic group than those of the *robins*. They use ceremonies from a time when Parliament was the bullring for ignorant squires, each, as Walpole said, with his price. Each was determined to be paid it before he spoke for England, even if it were to be paid in swine that they were. To follow the past of only one of the tribes of England must be peculiarly offensive to those other, and greater, civilisations who have come to live there.

Let me, as a Scot, a foreigner who always wishes England well, try to describe your ceremonial to you. I have an unprejudiced eye. Remember that I, too, am a member of the United Kingdom, even if it's something I'd rather not admit to on most occasions.

The State Opening of Parliament starts with an old lady being dragged through the streets of London behind horses. Everything in this absurd ceremony happens in London. Tribe-England has applied no imagination whatsoever to finding a way for other parts of the country to participate. It all happens in enclosed, incestuous London Town, and be damned to everyone else.

The horses stop. The old lady aghast. We are now at the Palace of Westminster, the quaint name given to the home of democracy. But democracy is having time off. All this has nothing to do with ordinary people, who are paying for this mummery. Tomorrow, Parliament will not be passing Acts: Parliament itself will be one big act.

It is an act with a cast of hundreds. Not being privy to all the jostling and jockeying, I can only come some of the principal



parts. There are gentlemen ushers, and black rods and silver rods – and perhaps the odd bewildered plumbing rod who has got there by mistake, the palaver being hellish. There are equestrians, and footmen so proud of being footmen that if they bowed any deeper

all the beer would fall out. There are the ladies in waiting, some of whom, by the look of them, have been waiting for a long, long time. Among these are the ladies of the bedchamber and the women of the bedchamber, the distinction between the two being terribly important. The importance is

not much discussed in Wolverhampton or Motherwell. How does one become a lady of the bedchamber, or even a woman? No such job has ever been advertised in the Oban job centre. If it were, the clerk would get a slap round the chops. Scotswomen have their pride.

Why I switched to new Labour

The Government has forgotten that civilised societies require market forces to operate within a social context, defined and regulated to the ultimate benefit of all their citizens. As a consequence, 17 years of Conservative rule has created two nations.

The rich have become much richer and the poor relatively poorer – 40 per cent of British people exist on income levels below the average wage – while directors of public utility companies shamelessly utilise what were public assets for private gain. Despite

Seventeen years of Conservative rule have produced two nations

the diminished power of the nation state within an increasingly interdependent world economy, the Government has forfeited any claim to be capable of leading the UK into the 21st century.

Unrestrained by a largely irrelevant and unrepresentative Parliament, individual ministers have ceased to recognise or serve the public interest. Yet they remain determined to hang on to office at any price. Their cynical contempt for the public has contributed in no small measure to the general culture of selfishness and disrespect which exists in Britain today. It really is time for a change.

Although they may win some seats in the South-West, the Liberal Democrats cannot defeat the Government in a general election. In any event, the public good requires opinion formers across the political spectrum to vote for change. Only new Labour has the combination of moral purpose and potential electoral support nationally to form a government committed to change.

Government inefficiencies, ministerial mistakes and political scandals – such as the ERM débâcle, the Pergau Dam, defence sales to Iran and Iraq, mad cow disease, Gulf war syndrome and cash-for-questions – combine to show a lack of concern for morality, justice and humanity in public life. It seems incapable of recognising that the systems of government evolved to manage a hierarchical 19th-century imperial power are wholly inappropriate for the management of a modern, participative industrial democracy.

By weakening local government, refusing to accept limited devolution in Scotland and Wales, and failing to recognise

"The man is a national treasure"

(What Doctors Don't Tell You)

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME?

Helpful Advice From Dr Vernon Coleman

If you suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome you will know only too well how this painful disorder can ruin your life. I used to suffer terribly from IBS, and had all the usual symptoms (pain, wind etc) but conquered the problem using a simple, two-step control programme. Since then my symptoms have virtually disappeared and the quality of my life has improved beyond measure. Now you can share the information that gave me back a normal life. I have produced a book called "Relief from IBS" that explains the methods I used to solve my IBS problem. The advice is written in an easy-to-follow style and includes a series of simple, practical guidelines designed to help you deal with your IBS in the same way that I dealt with mine. The topics covered include

• Causes and symptoms • How to look after your digestive system • Relief from wind • Tips on how to cope with stress • Foods that can make things worse

Having suffered from IBS for several years I know what a devastating effect it can have on your life and I do hope my book will be able to help you. You can try my advice without risk – if you don't find the book helpful then simply return it to me within 28 days of receipt for a full refund. As a bonus we will also send you a valuable FREE book worth £9.95 when you order. The contents of your free book include:

"Should you get a second opinion?", "How to get the best out of your doctor", "How to cope in an emergency", "How to live to be 100", "Improve your life by changing your diet", "How to protect yourself against viruses" and much, much more!

To order your copy of my book *Relief from IBS* send a cheque or postal order (to Publishing House) for £9.95 to IBS Book Offer, Sales Office, IN48, Publishing House, Trinity Place, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9HJ. Post and packing is FREE! For credit card sales please ring (01271) 328392. Your book will be sent to you within 28 days. Reading this book could help solve your IBS problem for good – and remember, you have nothing to lose but your symptoms. Your free book is yours to keep whatever you decide.

"His advice is optimistic and enthusiastic" (The British Medical Journal)

"Dr Vernon Coleman is one of our most enlightened, tranchant and sensible dispensers of medical advice" (The Observer)

Published by the European Medical Journal

But stop! The old woman has climbed the stairs. She is sitting in a big chair. She is taking her glasses out of her handbag. The show is about to begin.

Elsewhere, the function is unfolding in a different fashion. Enter a comedian called Black Rod. No! He's not a Caribbean called Rodney. Despite the multiracial nature of modern English society, there is not a black face to be seen. This is a white English tribal ritual.

Black Rod, who, poor bugger, is cast as the fall guy, knocks on a door. The door is opened, and then slammed in his face. But not for long. Behind the door, pinkie linked with pinkie, are our chaps, the ones we elected. As animals into the ark they proceed two by two to the Upper Chamber.

Now comes the really funny turn. My old friend James Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, no longer an athlete – in fact, a bit dodderly – mounts the stairs and gives the old lady a sheaf of papers.

Wait for it! This is comedy: James has to walk backwards down the stairs. There are walk-on parts, and speaking parts, and being the hind-legs-of-the-donkey parts, but the Lord Chancellor of England's walking-backwards-down-the-stairs part is unique in all theatre. After that, the old lady reads the script and everyone goes home.

As a Scot I find this English tribal ritual excruciatingly funny. The Parliament that has now been opened is my Parliament as well as England's. We're there. Or supposed to be. Yet there are no Scottish benches in the chamber, and we are supposed to take part in the rituals of one of the tribes of England, the white English tribe.

What's Black Rod to me, or me to Black Rod? My country-folk are Paisley's poor. Who are all these posh people? Are they paid? If so, how much? Even the time it's taken is time wasted. There are 10 non-controversial reforms on the shelves of the Scots Law Commission. They cannot be dealt with for lack of Parliamentary time.

But what makes me laugh above all is Westminster's claim to be a United Kingdom Parliament. What nonsense! What I have just described is one of the English tribes, making a fool of itself, the white English *robins* tribe. It's they who make England always good for a laugh. With the state opening of Parliament, they never disappoint us.

Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler

THE INDEPENDENT • Tuesday 21 October 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: Tel 0171 293 2636 fax 0171 293 2098

OFT to call for referral of Bass bid for Tetley

John Shepherd
Business News Editor

The Office of Fair Trading is to recommend that the Government refers the proposed takeover of Carlsberg-Tetley by Bass to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Senior officials at the OFT are applying the finishing touches to a report that will call for a full MMC investigation, and will probably pass their recommendation to the Department of Trade and Industry of its views in the next fortnight.

The £200m merger would create a business with 38 per cent of the beer market and more than 4,000 pubs, making it by far the country's biggest brewer ahead of Scottish & Newcastle.

Representatives from Allied Dunleavy, half owner of Carlsberg-Tetley, are understood to have been called to a meeting with officials at the OFT in the last week, at which they were told privately that the bid should be referred. A similar meeting to the same effect has apparently been held with Bass representatives.

Moreover, a source said yesterday that the OFT might even bring forward the meeting of the Mergers Panel - which comprises other Whitehall departments - at which John Bridgeman, Director of Fair Trading, will finally make up his mind and subsequently inform the DTI about the OFT's views.

The OFT's insistence on the deal being referred will surprise City analysts, many of whom firmly believe that the takeover will be nodded through with a few minor undertakings - such as the sale of some pubs, or the putting out to some of some beer supply contracts.

Shares in Bass have recovered strongly over the last few weeks following the inevitable fallout that occurred when the bid was announced.

Some observers believe that the OFT is still smarting from the DTI's clearance of last year's takeover of Courage that propelled Scottish & Newcastle Breweries into pole position in UK brewing with a 30 per cent-plus share of the market. Additionally, the OFT is

understood to be keen to take stock of events in the industry since the implementation of the Beer Orders in 1992 and particularly the potential consequences of Bass's dominant market share were it allowed to buy Carlsberg-Tetley.

One leading analyst said yesterday: "Consolidation was the logical conclusion of the Beer Orders, and it makes significant sense for the OFT to refer the biggest deal that there will be."

Not only is the OFT concerned about the competitive issues but it is, unusually, questioning the commercial logic of the Bass deal to buy Carlsberg-Tetley. This marks a radical change by the OFT in reviewing mergers. Told about this shift, one industry observer said yesterday: "From now on we will never know where we are with the competition authorities."

The OFT's investigation since the bid was formally announced in August has been unusually widespread - canvassing the views of every party from the big brewers to small beer clubs in towns. "Everyone that is conservatively involved in the industry has been consulted. If the OFT thinks that a deal is OK, then there will be minimal consultation," a source said.

While Mr Bridgeman has, according to sources, yet to see the full report from senior OFT officials about the Bass deal, he is more than aware of the successive control of Michael Heseltine and Ian Lang, who has ridden roughshod over the competition authority's recommendations on numerous occasions in recent years.

Even if the DTI does not refer the bid, then the OFT can still push its case by calling for an investigation into the whole brewing and pubs industry.

This has happened with the travel industry twice since the OFT pitched in, but was denied an investigation into the planned takeover by Airtime for Owners Abroad a couple of years ago. Recent reports suggest that the OFT has secured agreement from tour operators - mainly over the way they operate their travel agencies - that will allow them to escape an MMC reference.

Docklands firms see light at the end of the tunnel as £2.5bn Jubilee Line extension takes shape



City bankers and businessmen got a taste yesterday of what the journey to work will be like once the £2.5bn extension of the Jubilee line to Canary Wharf in London's Docklands is completed in 1998. To mark the construction of the tunnels that will link docklands to the City, the heads of six companies based at Canary Wharf were invited on a 2km walk under the Thames. Among those making the trip on foot were Sir David Walker, chairman of Morgan Stanley, Sir Peter Middleton chairman of BZW which moves in next year, David Vaughan, vice-president of Credit Suisse First Boston, David Alexander, legal director of Texaco and Colette Bowe, chief executive of the Persons Investment Authority. Also in attendance were Hugh Doherty, London Underground's project director, and Michael Pickard, chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation. The Jubilee line extension will run from Green Park to Canning Town and will carry an estimated 80 million passengers a year - by train, not on foot.

Photo: Philip Meech

Pearson soars on bid rumours

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Shares in Pearson, the media conglomerate, soared yesterday on speculation that it had once again become a takeover target and that it was contemplating breaking itself up to see off potential predators.

Reports that BSkyB is the satellite broadcaster owned 40 per cent by Rupert Murdoch, was considering a bid helped push the shares sharply higher in morning trading, hitting 745p at one point, a new high. By the end of the day, the price had moderated to 730p, still 33.5p ahead, as the market interpreted comments made by Sam Chisholm, chief executive, as indicating the bid was not imminent.

Pearson itself discounted the likelihood of a hostile approach, but analysts said BSkyB could easily afford Pearson, which might cost between £5bn and

£6bn to win. The prime target of BSkyB's affections was believed to be the television subsidiary, run by Greg Dyke, which takes in Thames Television, Grundy Worldwide and SelectTV, the makers of *Birds of a Feather*. The rest of Pearson's sprawling holdings would be sold off.

BSkyB has the distribution, but needs more original programming, Anthony de Laria-naga, analyst at Panmure Gordon, said. "Pearson Television has an real distribution."

Pearson has a 24 per cent stake in Channel 5, the planned fifth terrestrial channel. But the programming budget of just £110m a year is unlikely to give the company much of a market for its programmes.

Several analysts suggested yesterday that BSkyB might just be "staking the cage", in see off potential predators.

It is understood that several options for the company had already been considered by consultants and advisers prior to last week's announcement of Pearson's management succession.

Analysts said yesterday it was inevitable Pearson would move to restructure its businesses, whether or not a takeover had materialised. They suggested Pearson had still not streamlined its management structure and its array of assets, despite a radical overhaul of managerial responsibilities earlier this year.

Meanwhile, it emerged last night that Dennis Stevenson, the newly appointed deputy chairman of Pearson, had been the choice of at least three executive directors for the position of chairman, a role he assumes in April. His supporters were David Bell, John Makinson, finance director, and Greg Dyke.

It is also understood that the original shortlist for chief executive included Mr Makinson and at least two outsiders - Bob Phillips, the deputy director-general of the BBC and Archie Norman, chairman of Asda.

Photo: Philip Meech

Homes for sale at eight-year low as owners wait

Nic Cicutti
and Diane Coyle

The number of homes for sale in England and Wales has fallen

in an eight-year low, prompting fears of a property famine as sellers wait for further price increases before placing their houses on the market.

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors said the refusal of homeowners to put properties up for sale created a vicious circle because it meant they in turn could not find something suitable to buy.

The RICS report yesterday

came as a separate survey said consumer confidence remained close to its highest level since 1988, due to optimism about general economic prospects.

This news was taken well in the City, and the FTSE 100 share index reached a fresh record, closing 20 points up at 4,073.

Although the level of confidence has not changed during the month following a big jump in September, it remains high by past standards, according to the regular poll carried out for the European Commission by researchers GfK.

There was also an increase in the proportion saying they plan to buy a house or spend more on home improvements during the next 12 months.

The RICS survey said the number of properties for sale across the country was one-third lower during the period compared with the previous three months.

Among the reasons given for waiting before putting a property up for sale is the continuing negative and insufficient equity in vendors' homes, making it hard for them to sell. Also, some owners are unwilling to sell because they are waiting for free shares from building societies' demutualisation plans.

A RICS spokesman said: "The scarcity is driving up prices but it also means reasonably priced, desirable properties are being sold extremely quickly, giving the false impression that a 'bonn' is imminent. One of the main reasons for homeowners' reluctance to put their properties on the market is their sometimes over-optimistic expectation of further price rises."

Consumers questioned for the EC poll this month were glib about prospects for their own personal finances but more optimistic about the economy in general. Respondents expect unemployment to fall further.

Figures due out tomorrow and Friday will be scrutinised for signs that the improving "feel-good" factor is being reflected in official economic statistics. While City analysts expect tomorrow's sales figures to show a drop during September following a bumper August, they expect them to show continuing strong year-on-year growth.

The estimate of third-quarter GDP due on Friday could turn out to be important for next week's monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England.

The Governor has made it clear he thinks the economy's strong growth means there is a significant risk of missing the inflation target.

Labour pledge to monitor costs of PFI

Michael Harrison

A Labour government would introduce new controls to ensure that the Private Finance Initiative does not create huge spending commitments in future years that cannot be met.

Alistair Darling, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, also pledged that Labour would make sure that the private sector was paid only for risk that was genuinely transferred out of the public sector when awarding projects.

Speaking yesterday at the annual conference of the Private Finance Panel, Mr Darling warned that the public would lose faith in the PFI if it came to be seen as an ingenuous way of circumventing spending controls in at the taxpayers' expense.

By getting the private sector to put up capital expenditure for road, rail and health projects and then paying it back through a stream of revenue payments in future years, the Government was creating formidable commitments for future generations which it was failing to monitor in a systematic way.

"The Government must put in place such controls immediately. If they don't we will," he said. "We cannot allow this country to sign up to commitments that it cannot reasonably afford. There have to be proper controls in place."

Mr Darling also said that while Labour strongly supported the PFI, there would be much greater emphasis on making



Revolutionary: Kenneth Clarke defended the PFI

It is a genuine partnership between the public and private sector: "It is not just about commissioning investment projects: it is about procuring services."

Earlier, the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, rejected Labour's criticisms of the initiative saying it was leading to a "revolution in the provision of public services" with £7bn of deals so far done. He dismissed suggestions that the PFI amounted to a "buy now, pay later" mechanism for funding public projects and defended the Government's target of signing £13bn worth of PFI projects by the end of 1998-99.

He also unveiled new guidelines on how investors could trade stakes in PFI projects.

Comment, page 19

UK set for £700m Telekom bonanza

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British investors could be allocated more than £700m worth of shares in Europe's largest privatisation, the sell-off of Germany's state telephone company, Deutsche Telekom.

Details of the offer, disclosed yesterday, show UK investors will be awarded 8.12 per cent of the 500 million shares available.

The British allocation is likely to be second only in scale to that of the USA and Canada combined.

The vast majority of the shares destined for UK investors will go to institutions. Sources suggested the interest by retail investors in Britain, or "Sids", would probably be limited. The final allocation depends on the size of bids received during the institutional bookbuilding process which begins today.

However, in Germany the

privatisation has attracted huge interest of the kind seen during the first British privatisations in the mid-Eighties and looks set to be heavily oversubscribed. When the deadline for applications from private investors expired on 11 October, 3 million individuals had registered. Half the small investors applying had not bid shares before.

Organisers also revealed that after vetting 3.5 million applications received they discovered that 500,000 had been made twice. UK accountants Price Waterhouse have been engaged to check that no sum investors have profited more than once.

The final allocation depends on the size of bids received during the institutional bookbuilding process which begins today.

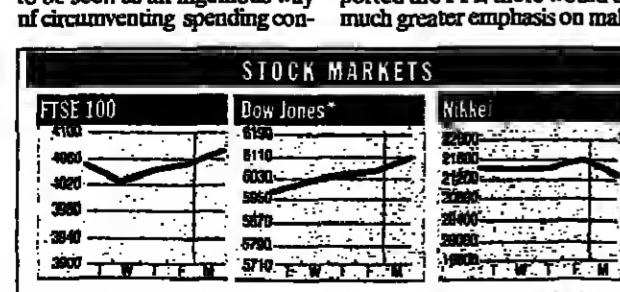
Deutsche said the indicative price range for the shares was DM25-DM30 a share, valuing the 20 per cent of the company being sold in the first phase at more than DM12.5bn.

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Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD (%)
FTSE 100	4073.10	+20.00	+0.5	4073.10	3632.30	3.84
Dow Jones	8140	+110	+1.4	8140	7830	10.0
Nikkei	21000	+1000	+4.8	21000	18000	10.0
1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996	1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Growth	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	YTD Change (%)
FTSE 100	4073.10	+20.00	+0.5	0	4073.10	+20.00	+0.5
Dow Jones	8140	+110	+1.4	0	8140	+110	+1.4
Nikkei							



COMMENT

'Everybody knows that buying on the never-never always comes home to roost eventually, but who cares when it is your successor that is going to have to sort out the mess?'

Taxpayers to foot bill as PFI bonds spread risk

Obviously read the Chancellor's mind. His announcement yesterday setting out how investors will be able to buy and sell stakes in Private Finance Initiative projects will have come as a surprise to them. They've already beaten him to it. Drive down the A1(M) between Alcobury and Peterborough when it is finished, or take the Docklands Light Railway to Lewisham when it is built, and you will be travelling courtesy of transport schemes funded by PFI bonds.

BZW arranged the bond issue for the DLR extension and Lehman and Warburgs for Road Management Group, the Amec/Alfred McAlpine consortium that is upgrading the A1. The surprise, if there is one, is that it has taken this long for the City and Government to cotton on to such an obvious way of funding PFI projects.

In the case of the A1 and the DLR, bondholders get paid their coupon and ultimately their capital from the shadow tolls the Government holds over every time a car uses the road or a passenger buys a ticket. What next? PFI bonds securitised against the income stream generated every time a criminal gets banged up or a patient has their appendix whipped out? The funding side of the PFI is pretty much sorted out. If the sheer volume of bankers and accountants in attendance at yesterday's beano to celebrate the PFI's fourth birthday is any guide, there is no shortage of money. The problems lie rather on the supply side. For all Ken

Clarke's attempts to make the PFI user-friendly, it is still dogged by a civil service mentality that finds it hard to get its mind around risk transfer and building contractors who persist in seeing it as public spending in hire-purchase form.

For all that the PFI has probably gathered enough momentum to guarantee its survival, Labour has embraced it as eagerly as the present Government as a way of easing the public finances. What could be more seductive than an initiative that turns capital spending today into current expenditure tomorrow? Everybody knows that buying on the never-never always comes home to roost eventually, but who cares when it is your successor that is going to have to sort out the mess? Spreading the risk through PFI bonds takes the process a stage further. What the investor would be buying, in essence, is a privatised gilt. That reality will need to be reflected in an enhanced coupon, inflating the ultimate cost of the project. As such, the financier's gain will be the public's loss.

Murdoch puts the frighteners on Pearson

Just who does control BSkyB? That question seems worth asking again because of the satellite television company's reported interest in bidding for Pearson. Any such enterprise would give BSkyB control of the F-

inancial Times and 24 per cent of Channel 5 – a state of affairs that regulators and the competition authorities would tolerate only if BSkyB were, as its chief executive Sam Chisholm always insists, completely independent of its 40 per cent shareholder, Rupert Murdoch.

On the face of it, this is not an easy corner to argue. Mr Murdoch is a main board director of BSkyB, and was instrumental in appointing its chief executive, Mr Chisholm, who in turn has a side contract with News Corporation, and sits its board. Mr Murdoch's daughter, Elizabeth, is now in charge of broadcast operations and all programming. BSkyB is regularly cited by Mr Murdoch in his discussions of News Corporation's global media strategy, and is indeed a key outpost of his world empire.

As any other board member who gets the final say on decisions and the answer is unambiguous – Rupert Murdoch. All the same there is a case for arguing that since the company is no longer majority-owned by Mr Murdoch, he no longer controls it. The company's chairman is not Mr Murdoch but Gerry Robinson, whose Granada Group has an 11 per cent holding. Going for Pearson would also involve a high degree of dilution, further undermining Mr Murdoch's position.

All this is a trifle academic, however. It seems unlikely in the extreme that Mr Murdoch would be allowed anywhere near the FT, even if indirectly through a reduced stake in BSkyB. Moreover, the FT is not the

target of BSkyB's preliminary musings over a Pearson takeover. The real prize is the television subsidiary, worth perhaps as much as £1bn. This is surely what lies behind the present bout of excitement.

It is an attempt to bounce and frighten Pearson, which is in a difficult inter-regnum between management regimes: into selling. The attractions of Pearson's TV business to BSkyB are obvious. BSkyB needs to develop its own programming, which at present is largely bought in. Pearson provides a ready made programming unit, unencumbered except for its stake in Channel 5 by a terrestrial licence.

Mr Chisholm is no doubt as keen as the next man to empire-build, but unless he's seriously fallen out with Mr Murdoch, it is hard to see why he should want to go the whole hog and use BSkyB to build a combined broadcast and publishing group to rival News Corp. That doesn't mean he wouldn't bid for Pearson to break it up, but how much better for everyone if Pearson just sells him what he really wants.

Mutuals receive short shrift

That long promised Building Societies Bill may not have done much to protect what is rapidly becoming an endangered species, but it certainly seems to have set Angela Knight's pulse racing. The Treasury Minis-

ter told the Building Societies Association annual conference last May that she was "pressing, urging, kicking, shouting, pushing, requesting, asking and nagging in order to get the parliamentary time [for this Bill] as soon as possible". And, she reminded her audience, she is "a good nagger". Not good enough, it seems.

The Treasury admitted yesterday that the Bill will not figure in the Queen's Speech, and there was only the vaguest of possibilities that it would be resurrected at a later stage.

Poor Mrs Knight. The unfortunate truth is that this watered-down Bill would not actually have done much to revive the slowly dying mutual movement in any case. There was a bit of tinkering at the edges to put building societies on a more equal footing with banks, some measures to improve accountability, and some anti-takeover clauses, but it was hardly enough to stem the tide of conversion and takeover. All the same, it was something. There's to be no life-line of any variety now.

The fact that the Government cannot find any time amid a legislative programme cluttered with such measures of such obvious and vital public importance as the National Heritage Memorial Fund Bill doesn't say much for the regard in which it holds building societies.

Ministers seem to care more about Britain's stock of stately homes than its last remaining mutuals.

BP to build chemical factory in China

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The Chinese obsession with manmade sweaters was one of the factors behind a \$2.5bn (£1.6bn) deal announced yesterday by the UK oil giant BP, the company's biggest joint venture in the People's Republic and its second substantial investment there in the space of a year.

BP Chemicals said it had signed a letter of intent with one of China's biggest chemicals producers, the Shanghai Petrochemical Company, for the construction of a plant to make 650,000 tons of ethylene a year. Both sides stressed that the agreement was part of a long-term partnership to use BP's expertise in technology, management and marketing which could have other lucrative spin-offs.

It follows BP's first large-scale move into China last December with Sinopec, the largest state petrochemical firm and the majority shareholder of the Shanghai Petrochemical Company.

Construction has already started on the \$200m (£136m) project in which BP has a 51 per cent stake. Called the Yangtze River Acetyle Company, the plant makes acetic acid, a basic chemical widely used in the manufacture of textiles, paints and herbicides.



Commitment: John Browne has signed an agreement

Construction work on the latest project is unlikely to start for a year and the first phase is expected to involve the building of a plant making

acrylonitrile, a key component in the production of manmade fibres. BP's acrylonitrile production technology, developed in the 1980s, is used in 95 per

cent of the world's manufacturing capacity, either in the form of joint ventures or under license.

BP said the initial intention was that the two partners should each own 50 per cent of the venture, though the value of the British investment would include cash and technology, while Shanghai Petrochemical would provide some of its existing plants.

The deal is a further demonstration of BP's drive to gain a significant foothold in the vast Chinese market, most recently through close ties with Sinopec.

The company has been keen to show its commitment to the country and yesterday's signing ceremony, held in Peking's Great Hall of the People, was attended by John Browne, BP's chief executive.

"BP has been quite aggressive to get into China, despite the fact that historically it didn't have a very high exposure in Asia," said Fergus MacLeod, an oil analyst with NatWest Markets.

The first BP deal with the Chinese, a chemical licensing agreement, was signed in 1973 as the country took the tentative steps towards opening its economy.

More recent investments have included \$200m (£126m) invested in onshore and offshore oil exploration.

IN BRIEF

• Jeremy Bartholomew-White, managing director of the failed Scandex Capital Management foreign exchange company, was ordered into the witness box by a High Court judge to explain what had happened to investors' cash. Copenhagen-based Scandex lost £1m of a total of £1.28m of investors' money. Mr Justice Chadwick said he rejected Mr Bartholomew-White's application for another seven days to comply with orders because he had changed his solicitors. Under cross-examination Mr Bartholomew-White was asked if his statements about the assets of Scandex represented "the whole truth". He replied: "Nothing has been left out but we need to qualify things." He was then asked, if all clients' money was held in segregated accounts, what assets the company held and where they were. Mr Bartholomew-White said he believed the company had used all the money "running the business". The hearing continues today.

• The Football Association yesterday named Wembley as its preferred site for a national stadium. The decision to opt for the world-famous site instead of Manchester was announced after a meeting of the FA's executive committee. It came hours after Britain's athletics bosses plumped for Wembley as the best choice. The Sports Council will make a final decision by year-end. *Full story, page 26*

• Alex Fletcher, sales director of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management's unit trust arm, has left to join JP Morgan to work in its asset management operation. Mr Fletcher is believed to be the first director to leave the firm voluntarily since the Peter Young scandal broke.

• Vodafone, the UK's largest mobile phone operator, has signed up its millionth digital customer, the first mobile firm to do so. The company claimed its lead over the next largest rival digital network had increased to 300,000 in September from near parity in January.

• Broad money growth in Germany slowed to 8.4 per cent in September, from a surprisingly strong 8.7 per cent in August. The most significant aspect of the slowdown was weaker growth in private sector lending, which is now well below its spring peak.

• Euro Disney said its chairman, Philippe Bourguignon, would take on the additional role of executive vice-president of Walt Disney Co Europe. He will remain primarily responsible for the Disneyland Paris resort, but will also co-ordinate all of Walt Disney's activities in Europe, in co-operation with the European heads of each of the company's main operating subsidiaries.

• Angerstein, a Lloyd's underwriting investment trust, is in talks to buy Coffey, the managing agent for Lloyd's Marine Syndicate 902. The discussions are part of Angerstein's strategy to expand its underwriting capabilities and follows the announcement last month that the group intended to buy J E Mumford Holdings, another underwriter. The Coffey syndicate, established in 1976, has an unbroken record of profits and an underwriting capacity of £37.5m.

Investors call on Greencoat to break itself up

Nigel Cope

Rebel investors Brian Myerson and Julian Treger yesterday called for the break up of Greencoat, the property group, saying the management had no clear strategy to deliver value for shareholders.

The two investors, whose UK Active Value Fund holds an 11 per cent stake in Greencoat, have requisitioned an Emergency General Meeting to discuss its proposal to sell Greencoat's entire £500m portfolio. This must be called within 49 days.

"The management has failed to deliver. We'd rather have our money back," Mr Myerson said.

Greencoat's managing director, Peter Thornton, described the move as "an unwelcome and costly distraction".

He said such a sale would be premature as the commercial property market in London was not predicted to peak until 1998.

"The timing is awful. It's completely the wrong time to do it," Mr Thornton said.

Greencoat shares rose 5.5p to 148.5p.

Greencoat is one of a string of companies targeted by the UK Active Value Fund, which specialises in buying stakes in underperforming companies. It has also led shareholder pressure groups in Simec, the jeweller and Scholl, the footwear group.

Last week the fund called for

Hogg Robinson to break itself up and buy back half the shares.

UK Active Value acquired its stake in Greencoat during a re-financing of the company in 1993 when it was on the brink of collapse.

Mr Myerson has had an easy relationship with the company since then and resigned from the board in March in protest against the company's strategy to return to speculative development.

Mr Myerson criticised Greencoat's performance, saying the company's shares stood at a 23 per cent discount to its forecast net asset value of around £185m.

He denied he was calling for a fire sale, saying the portfolio could be disposed of over an 18-month period.

He also denied that the apparent willingness of UK Active Value to sell its stake had cast a pall over the share price. The fund claims it has never sold a single share in the company.

Both sides claimed to have the support of institutional shareholders.

One fund manager described Mr Myerson's action as premature, given the forecasts for the London property market.

"The market is improving and I'm not convinced that liquidising the portfolio is the best way to realise the value," he said.

Investment column, page 20

Racing Green sold for £19m

Nigel Cope

Retail entrepreneur David Krantz netted his second high-street fortune yesterday when he sold the Racing Green mail order and stores group to Burton for £19m.

Mr Krantz, 43, also founded the Blazer menswear chain in the early 1980s before selling it to Storhouse for £5m in 1987. It was acquired by Moss Bros in June.

A former travelling salesman who used to sell menswear from a suitcase, Mr Krantz said he preferred the formative stages of a business to running a larger concern.

"I've got other things I want to do, though I might have a little holiday first," he said. His next venture could include a restaurant and something involving organic food. "It certainly won't be in clothing."

Mr Krantz founded Racing Green in 1991 after noticing the success of mail order companies such as Lands' End in the US. Racing Green started as a mail order concern specialising in up-

market casual clothing. "I'd seen the growth of specialities in America in the 1980s and I thought it would be the right thing to do here in the 1990s," Mr Krantz said.

Though two-thirds of its sales still come from its catalogues, the group now has five high-street stores, including a flagship store on London's Regent Street. It achieved sales of £18m last year though it only broke even.

Burton said the deal complemented the £45m acquisition of the Innovations mail order group in August.

"We see home shopping as a growth sector; a coming thing," said Burton's finance director, Andrew Higginson. He said the purchase of Innovations had given Burton access to database management and marketing skills required in mail order.

The acquisition of Racing Green was more about the brand. "We think it's got a lot of potential," Mr Higginson said. Burton plans to build the mail order business and add more stores. It is possible that

the company will open Racing Green outlets within its Debenhams stores.

Burton said in the summer that it hoped to introduce catalogues versions of its main brands such as Burton, Dorothy Perkins and Principles to the UK over the next two years.

"Burton is paying £15m in cash with the remaining £4m to be retained as a consultant.

Andrew Higginson: Sees home shopping as a growth area

ing funded by the issue of 2.7 million new Burton shares. An additional £1m may be payable if Racing Green meets performance targets for the year ending December 1996.

Mr Krantz will remain with Racing Green for three months to ensure a smooth management hand over. He will then be retained as a consultant.

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Greenalls shares lack sparkle

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Despite being one of the market's success stories in the 1990s, pub and hotel group Greenalls always seems to provide analysts with something to worry about. If it isn't depreciation charges on pub freeholds or indifferent summer weather or suspect cashflow, it is the merger of Bass and Carlsberg-Tetley and the effect that will have on the price of beer.

The shares have underperformed the rest of the market by 6 per cent over the past three months, despite a bullish trading statement a month ago that laid most fears to rest.

From sleepy family brewer, with a can share structure to boot, Greenalls has grown through astute acquisitions to the point where it flirted with FTSE 100 membership earlier this year. Along the way it has become one of the UK's leading leisure companies, slugging it out with Whitbread in some of the fastest-growing segments of the industry - managed pubs, hotels and travel lodges.

Like Whitbread, it read the runes well in the wake of the 1989 Beer Orders and realised there was a better future in the retailing of beer than in its manufacture. It has watched the swelling return from the likes of Carlsberg-Tetley from the sidelines over the past few years and has made its feelings clear to the OFT about further consolidation in the beverage. What is bad for the brewers in terms of overcapacity is ultimately good news for the buyers of discounted beer and there is no bigger buyer than Greenalls.

Greenalls is operating in some benign markets just now. Hotels are benefiting from a demographic shift that is seeing older, wealthier people taking more weekend breaks, and a cyclical upturn that is seeing more tourists visiting British rooms. The food element of pub trade is on a seemingly inexorable upward track as we eat more frequently out of the home and as food sales rise, drinks sales are dragged along with them.

So why are the shares in the doldrums? Partly, there is a real fear that a combined Bass/Carlsberg operation would use its increased clout to push up the price of Greenalls' most important input cost. There are worries that the company is rather better at spending cash than generating it, although investment spending of over £150m a year is likely to be, at worst, cash neutral.

Finally, although Greenalls has proved adept at buying profits, it is less good at turning them into improved earnings, which have improved at less than 10 per cent a year for the past three years and are forecast to grow at only 11 per cent in the year just fin-

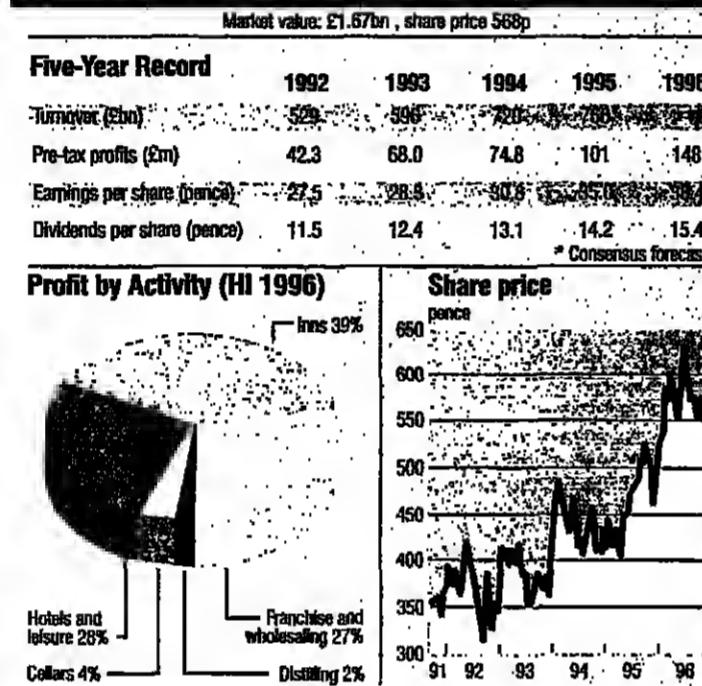
ished and only 6 per cent in the next 12 months. Against that backdrop, a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14 is unlikely to improve much and the shares, at 568p, will continue dull.

Myerson loses his patience

Brian Myerson's call to break up Greycoat seems the act of a man whose patience has finally run out. Mr Myerson's UK Active Value fund bought into the property group in 1993 when the company had fallen foul of the recession and was on the brink of extinction. Having acquired his stake at around 130p Mr Myerson has watched with irritation as the share price has gone nowhere in the past three years, barring a brief flurry immediately after the restructure.

It is clearly frustration that lack of progress that has prompted his call to liquidate Greycoat's assets. With the share price edging up 5.5p to 148.5p yesterday, Mr Myerson is basically hoping to get his money back.

GREENALLS: AT A GLANCE



There is a case for Greycoat to prune its portfolio, possibly with the sale of the Embankment Place site. New developments will come to the market early in 1998 while the company is also looking for London properties to upgrade. Mr Myerson has done some investors proud by putting a rocket under the boards of companies such as Liberty. But shareholders should reject his proposals on this one.

Biotech is not a short-term bet

If you bought shares in International Biotechnology Trust in the hope of eliminating some of the volatility inherent in this more speculative of sectors, you will have been disappointed. Since the Rothschild-managed fund was launched at 100p two-and-a-half years ago, it has been as low as 75p, up to 150p, and most of the way back again.

That roller-coaster ride has reflected the market's love-hate relationship with biotech, which has seen some dizzy gyrations even from the blue-chip end of the industry where British Biotech tripled in the first six months of the year before losing a third of its value over the following four months.

IBT has also provided evidence, if any were needed, that investments in young, hi-tech companies can go both ways. During the year, Cytel, an American investment, fell from 39p to a share price of \$3 after trials of a heart drug came to nothing. That was a major contributor to a fall in IBT's net assets of 11 per cent during the year.

Two points need to be made about this fall. First, it is inevitable that a fund investing in untried companies will have occasional setbacks of this order. Second, the share price is only loosely driven by the NAV. During the year to 1995, IBT's shares rose 22 per cent.

Investors in IBT need to be able to shut their eyes to short-term fluctuations and view their shareholding as a medium-term bet on a handful of the 90 products on trial at the company coming good. The trust itself is in these companies for between three and five years and its close relationship with management, bringing in new executives and steering them towards the right strategic partners, is likely to take this long to come to fruition.

If you have only limited funds to throw at the biotech sector, and cannot afford to do your own diversification, this is the best way to gain an exposure to the potentially exciting capital gains it could provide.

Bell Cablemedia to buy Videotron in \$600m deal

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

A \$600m (£377m) deal heralding the biggest shake-up in the UK telecommunications market since deregulation could be unveiled as early as today, presenting a huge competitive challenge to BT's near-monopoly of telephone services.

Complex negotiations between Cable & Wireless and Bell Cablemedia continued over the weekend and late into last night, aimed at finalising the takeover of the cable operator Videotron and the merger of the combined group's telephony services with C&W's UK subsidiary, Mercury.

The deal is expected to involve Bell Cablemedia taking control of Videotron, in which it has 26 per cent stake. Cable & Wireless, which owns 13 per cent of Bell Cablemedia, is likely to expand its stake in the enlarged company and will secure Mercury direct access to hundreds of thousands of residential phone customers for the first time.

The move is a surprisingly swift demonstration of the strategy of C&W's recently appointed chief executive, Dick Brown, outlined to City analysts at a cocktail party six weeks ago. His priority was to give Mercury direct access to customers in the UK to prevent its share being squeezed by the expanding cable operators and BT.

Currently, Mercury lays cables only to large business subscribers with phone lines in the region of £10,000 a year. Other smaller customers have to access Mercury using a special button on the handsets of their phones.

Indirect access meant the lucrative special dialling services offered by BT could not be provided and brought the inconvenience of two sets of bills.

An internal strategic review is due to be completed by Mercury for Mr Brown over the past few weeks.



Moving swiftly: Dick Brown outlined plans six weeks ago

proposed a huge expansion into the so-called local loop, raising Mercury's annual investment from £350m to around £500m.

Trials have been conducted this year, laying cables to small businesses in Bristol and using fixed radio links.

However, a much quicker route to wider coverage was always through the purchase of a UK cable operator. Videotron became the obvious target when its Canadian parent put the UK side of the business up for sale earlier this year.

The Anglo-Canadian company has invested around £400m since the late 1980s, building up a cable network in the UK which covers affluent areas of west and south London and Southampton. A valuable prize is its two telephone-only cable franchises in Westminster and the City of London.

Combining Videotron with Bell Cablemedia would give Cable & Wireless access to a potential 1.5 million homes, second only to Telewest in the size of its coverage.

The challenge for C&W will be to raise take-up rates of the services, which are currently less than 300,000 for television and telephony.

Barclays mulls custody sale

IN BRIEF

• Provend, one of the UK's largest independent vending machine companies, is planning a stock market flotation. The company, a management buyout from Sketchley, employs 720 staff, 20 per cent of whom are shareholders, and operates nationally, supplying 15,000 machines. Provend made a profit before interest and tax of £1.98m in the year to June 1996, compared with a £6.8m loss in the year to March 1990.

• Foreign & Colonial Ventures has announced the completion of a £2.5m investment in Wagamama, the mid-market Japanese noodle bar chain. Started in Brixton in 1992, a second restaurant was opened this year in Soho. Wagamama is based on Ramen bars, noodle shops that have flourished in Japan since the 1980s. There are no starters or desserts, food arrives in less than seven minutes, and customers tend to stay in the restaurants for less than 45 minutes. The new funds will be used to expand the chain further.

• Oliver Property, the London-based property investment and development company, saw pre-tax profits rise by 38 per cent to £469,000 in the half year to June. Earnings per share increased by 51 per cent to 0.74p. Net assets rose from £19.9m to £23.7m.

• William Sinclair has bought Gammacross, the maker of accessories for pets, for a maximum £5.24m. In its last financial year, Gammacross made taxable profits of £440,000 from sales of £4.7m.

• Waterfall has exchanged contracts to buy two snooker clubs for £285,000. The clubs are in Peterborough and in west London, and have been bought from Martin and Thomas Rowland.

• Scruttons has completed the £1.45m disposal of its GHL Lifetrucks mechanical handling business to a management buyout. Some £1.35m has been received in cash, and the balance is payable within the next nine months.

• S Daniels has bought Brash Brothers, a processor, packer and distributor of tea, coffee and other powdered beverages, for a maximum consideration of £1.85m. Brash Brothers, which was founded in 1891 and is based in Northfleet, Kent, markets its own brands - King Cup, Empsons and Aristocrat - alongside own-label products. In the year ended October 1995, losses were £189,000 on turnover of £14.5m.

is ranked 12th in size with \$102bn under management, well into the world's top 10 of custodians.

It would allow the US investment bank to challenge rivals, including Deutsche Bank and Citibank, but leave Chase Manhattan well in the lead with its \$1,000bn in custody.

No price has been placed on the deal. However, when Lloyds Bank bought the £57m custody business of National Westminster Bank last year, it paid about £17m, suggesting this deal could be worth three times that amount.

It comes amid growing consolidation among global players and the realisation that to remain competitive, custodians must invest larger amounts in new technology. Earlier this year, Royal Bank of Scotland became one of the biggest custodians after reaching a deal with Mercury Asset Management to set up a joint bank, RBS Trust Bank.

Apart from the Lloyds purchase from NatWest, Bank of New York, the third-largest custodian, took over the business of Bank of America and JP Morgan.

John Wilcock

Problems in the United States with marketing the Duchess of York's children's books and videos based on *Budgie the Little Helicopter* prompted a 25 per cent fall in the share price of BT's UK publisher, Sleepy Kids, yesterday, as well as a profits warning from the company. Sleepy Kids' share price fell 20p, to 23p.

Martin Powell, chairman of Sleepy Kids, said yesterday afternoon that while the Budgie

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Mr Powell said Launey Hachmann Harris's agreement was terminated by Sleepy Kids on 29 April. There would be a necessary legal delay until a new US agent could be appointed, he said, then the property would be relaunched throughout the US via a stronger agent.

The chairman said: "Inevitably the marketing of Budgie in the US has been severely disrupted by our agent failing Chapter 11 in that territory. It is very frustrating to have such a success on coast-to-coast US television, only for it to be wasted by missed opportunities."

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Budgie setback sparks Sleepy Kids warning

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IBERIA

Time Warner rejection of quick brown Fox sparks conflagration

Rupert Murdoch, used to getting his own way, is fighting a reversal of fortunes, reports David Usborne in New York

All of New York is absorbed by baseball just now, and, specifically, the World Series clash between the city's own Yankees and the Atlanta Braves. So far it has been a soggy affair, courtesy of the weather. For my money, the other battle going on here beats it hands down for thrills and for amusement value.

Actually, there is a connection between the two. The Braves are owned by Ted Turner, whose cable empire, Turner Broadcasting, was finally merged 10 days ago into Time Warner. That little manoeuvre lies behind the fabulously seafarman battle that Time Warner now finds itself waging with Rupert Murdoch.

Anyone who has suffered Mr Murdoch's conquer-the-world antics in Britain struggling to emerge from the dominance of BSkyB, or indeed the publishers of this newspaper, might wish to indulge in a little private *Schadenfreude* from the difficulties he is facing courtesy of Time Warner in the Big Apple. Enjoy it while you can, though. Time Warner may be bigger than he is, but Mr Murdoch has a way of winning these things.

At issue is the fate of Mr Murdoch's latest media foray - his Fox News, 24-hour cable service that was launched in the United States two weeks ago.

It is a biggy, even by Murdoch standards, with \$30m (£20m) already spent and a budget of \$165m for the first year of operation alone. To succeed, however, it must get itself into as many US front rooms as possible. Above all, it needs to be seen in New York City, where, after all, it is based.

Which cable system covers Manhattan and most of the rest of the Apple? The answer, of course, is Time Warner Cable. Murdoch believed until late last month that he had the word of Gerald Levin, Time Warner chief executive, that space would be found on the system for his Fox News. But just days before the Fox launch, Mr

Levin in person crossed Sixth Avenue to tell Mr Murdoch the deal was off. Yes, Time Warner would, as required by the government, carry an all-news alternative to Turner's CNN. That, however, would not be for but MSNBC, another 24-hour service launched earlier in the summer by NBC and Microsoft.

Ka-boom. The Australian dynamite was ignited. Raging now is a conflagration between two of the world's biggest media giants that has already travelled deep into the courts. Mr Murdoch swiftly filed suit against Time Warner accusing it of anti-trust conspiracy, fraud and breach of contract (even though nothing of what Mr Levin allegedly promised was ever written down). "When you're screwed over, you fight," commented Roger Ailes, the former Republican consultant who is running the Fox News Channel (FNC) for Mr Murdoch. "We're not going to quit

it to further his agenda. Basically, that is what Murdoch does with the media."

What else has Mr Murdoch done? He has called for the political cavalry, of course, recruiting the assistance of New York City's Republican mayor, Rudolph Giuliani. Mr Giuliani attempted to humiliate Time Warner by forcing it to carry both Fox and Bloomberg News on two public access channels available in the city. Time Warner filed suit against that, accusing the mayor of illegally involving city government in private broadcast business. An injunction against Mr Giuliani was quickly secured, while a first full hearing is scheduled for tomorrow.

The politicians are attempting to help Mr Murdoch in other ways too. The city agency that awards cable franchises to the five boroughs has been convened to determine whether the ingestion of Turner signifies that Time Warner is es-



Rolling up his sleeves: Ted Turner, the owner of CNN, is known to relish the prospect of a tough fight

in political debts owed to him by the mayor of New York in an effort to force Fox on to the Time Warner Cable system." Richard Adelstein, the president of Time Warner's New York cable subsidiary, added: "This is the most frightening exercise of political power that I have seen in my entire career".

An indignant Mr Giuliani may be obliged to testify in

sympathy for Mr Murdoch. It is rather pathetic that Fox finds itself unavailable to viewers in its own home base and without the New York market its future must be shaky. As things stand, it counts only 17 million subscribers for its new channel, compared with 25 million for MSNBC and 7 million for CNN. And with Turner now under his wing, Time Warner is indeed a company with unhealthy muscle. On the other hand, if there was ever anyone who should understand what Time Warner is about, it is Mr Murdoch. Squishing his rivals is what being big is all about, isn't it?

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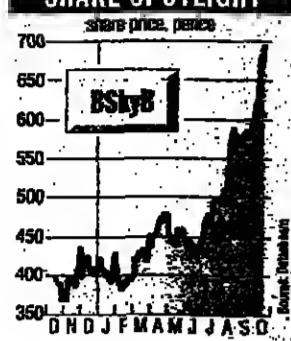
There are reasons to have

market report / shares

DATA BANK

FTSE 100	4073.1	+20.0
FTSE 250	4449.4	-0.7
FTSE 350	2022.1	+7.8
SEAO VOLUME	614.1m shares	
Glits Index	42,670 bargains	
93.9	-0.10	

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



BTR out of step as Footsie continues to march forward

BTR, the sprawling conglomerate which Ian Strachan is endeavouring to reinvent as a global engineering and manufacturing group, fell 5p to 254.5p, its lowest since August when worries abounded about its interim profits. In the event the figures were at least in line with the most subdued expectations and the shares moved ahead, topping 280p.

Such an advance was crucial to BTR. It had a batch of warrants exercisable at 250p within 30 days of last month's results. If taken up in full they represented a much-needed £280m cash inflow.

For months before the interim figures BTR shares traded below the warrant strike price. Now the figures are out and the warrants exercised by those who felt it worthwhile to do so, BTR shares seem to be back on the downward trail. Volume yesterday was put at around 8.5 million with some

lumpy deals going through at below the old warrant price. BTR has dramatically underperformed other blue chips. The Strachan revamping exercise is welcome but many observers fear it will be years before any benefits start to flow through.

The once-fashionable conglomerate suffered its latest reverse as front-running shares hit yet another peak, with Footsie up 20 points to a record 4,073.1. Once again, volume was less than usual, with many investors content to sit on the sidelines. Positive trading in New York was again the most telling influence.

Pearson, the media group, was the best-performing blue chip. Last week's management changes, which promoted little-known Marjorie Scardino to chief executive, were forgotten as bid stories swirled. BSkyB, the satellite television station, denied rumoured interest but

Pearson, for long seen as a break-up bid candidate, was undaunted, gaining 33.5p to 730p.

If BSkyB does not pounce there is a strong belief others will. Analysts believe the Financial Times to Lazarus banking group commands a break-up valuation of more than 900p. BSkyB edged forward 5.5p to 696.5p.

Reuters, ahead of an investment presentation, put on 10.5p to 805p. The group's innovative plan to hand out cash to shareholders has been blocked by the Government's plan to share buybacks but some wonder whether the information group is preparing

a special dividend plan to overcome the Whitehall block.

Cadbury Schweppes, with presentations in the US, melted 3p to 517.5p. It seems there is a growing divide between London and US analysts about the group's prospects in general and in particular its decision to challenge the might of Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola in their home market.

Zeneca, the drugs group, was another to defy gravity, up 33.5p to 1,758.5p. Cortec International managed a modest 6.5p rally to 206.5p on new developments, including a migraine treatment.

Skypharm added 6p to 83p on its US deal and sug-

gestions from SBC Warburg the shares could be worth around 1,000p.

Cable & Wireless edged ahead 4.5p to 441p on hopes it could, without too much of a cash outlay, emerge as a major shareholder in Videotron, the cable company.

National Westminster Bank improved 12p to 721p as ABN Amro Hoare Govett suggested a switch out of Abbey National, down 5p to 604.5p.

T&N stuck at 129p although Warburg believe the shares are worth nearer 100p; Imperial Chemical Industries, ahead of figures on Thursday, fell 5p to 792.5p.

Ciels were firm, partly on the strength of the crude price. British Petroleum added 9p to 687.5p following its joint venture in China.

East Midlands Electricity edged forward to 465.5p. There is a growing suspicion it will be the next utility to attract

US attention. The shares are around their year's low, leaving the group looking vulnerable to a determined strike.

A trading statement from Steely Kids, the merchandising operation taking in the Duchess of York's creation, Budgie the Helicopter, sent the shares spinning 6.5p lower to 20p.

Strong & Fisher, the leather group, spurted 8p to 20.5p on the mop-up bid from Hillsdown Holdings and CA Spectra (Special Agency), a button group which has for long enjoyed the dubious distinction of being one of the market's favourite shell situations, jumped 87.5p to 887.5p. The shares are an exceedingly thin market and consequently prone to sharp movements.

Courtauld, the sports group was suspended at 6.75p. It is thought to be near to buying a football league club, with Sheffield United the name in the frame.

TAKING STOCK

□ The quintessentially named Po Na chain of late-night bars is the toast of Nigel Propham, drinks analyst at stockbroker Teather & Greenwood. He believes the shares, traded on the fringe of the market, are on a too-cautious rating at 15p, up 2p. He sees profits from £33,000 to £400,000, with £220,000 likely next year. The company, which is related to fully quoted Grosvenor Inns, has seven bars with North African themes, with another to open soon in Edinburgh.

□ Courtyard Leisure looks interesting. The shares climbed 1.5p to 17.75p on indications margins at the wine bar business are improving. Robert Earl, creator of Planet Hollywood, has a 3.25 per cent stake and Lomond Investment, running the Drum & Monkey bar chain, has 29.9 per cent.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling, except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 25 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: r = Rights issue; Ex = Ex dividend; A = All up; S = Suspended; P = Partly Paid; pm = Paid Shares; \$ = All Stock.

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to buy a portfolio of shares whose prices by phone from Sopaq. Simply dial 0800 300 1000, then dial the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest share price, dial 0800 300 1033 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000
ASDA Group	540,000	British Energy	500,000	Burton	320,000	Cash & Carry	300,000
Harrods	540,000	BTR	500,000	British Telecom	320,000	National Power	300,000
BT	540,000	BAF Inds	70,000	Shell Transport	480,000	British Gas	480,000
British Gas	540,000	Pearson	500,000	Bank of Scotland	540,000	Exxon Corp	540,000
Imperial Chemicals	540,000	Lygia TSB	500,000	Barclays	470,000	British Steel	470,000

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

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sport

ONE DAY IN AMERICA

A remarkable 24 hours in the United States produced an extraordinary variety of sporting drama

Yankees swept away in a flood of nostalgia

BASEBALL

David Usborne watches the Bronx Bombers blow up spectacularly in the opening game of the World Series

Never has a sporting event attracted such hyperbole. They call it the World Series, when it is nothing of the sort (What could be more domestic to the United States than baseball?). They still call the New York Yankees America's team, even if this was their first shot at the Series in 18 years. And they call the Yankees the best, when... well, more of that in a moment.

But step off the No 4 subway train adjacent to Yankee Stadium in the Bronx early on Sunday evening and such quibbles instantly evaporate. Never mind the misplaced arrogance and the years of disappointment, the Bronx Bombers, as the Yankees are also known, are back at the top. The streets are seething with pilgrims desperate for a win over the Atlanta Braves. And I, all of a sudden, am a pilgrim too.

Beneath the elevated rails of the subway and under the towering white concrete walls of the House That Ruth Built is New York City distilled. "Go Yankee" supplements of the city tabloids carpet the streets. Brass bands play. Police horses trample. And everyone, it seems, is searching, searching for gold. Tickets are gold. Cash – sometimes up to \$1,000 – changes hands in knotted groups. Undercover police officers watch, wait and pounce. Tens of thousands will be in jail cells by the end of the evening.

And so, at last, we, the lucky ones, step inside the stadium. The anticipation is overwhelming. This is the first of the best-of-seven games and it has been delayed by a day because of a tempest that lashed the city on Saturday. The field is ready thanks mostly to those other "finest" of New York's police. Two police helicopters had spent part of the day hovering low over the turf, their whirling blades being used as giant hairdryers.

The nostalgia pours down on us faster than the rain the night before, Joe DiMaggio, second only to Babe Ruth in the pantheon of Yankee icons, steps on the field to throw out the first ball. And the capacity crowd of some 56,000 goes wild. Images of Mickey Mantle, another Yankee legend who died from cancer last year, flash across the video screen. What game could possibly match such a build-up? Only a game that is won by the Yankees.

There are few sights more magical and closer to the soul of this country than that of a baseball diamond under lights. The giant stripes left by the mowers are a magnified version of the neatness of the Centre Court at Wimbledon. There is something of Wembley Stadium here also – the merciless inhospitality that the home team fans show to the few Braves supporters who have been foolish enough to show up and reveal themselves.

This was the moment to be sober and to consider the opposition: the Braves, who have been in four of the last five World Series. In the 1990s it is they who have really been America's team. And they had arrived in the Bronx after coming from behind to crush the St Louis Cardinals in the National League Championship Series. Although no New York tabloid writer had dared admit it, the odds had to be in their favour.

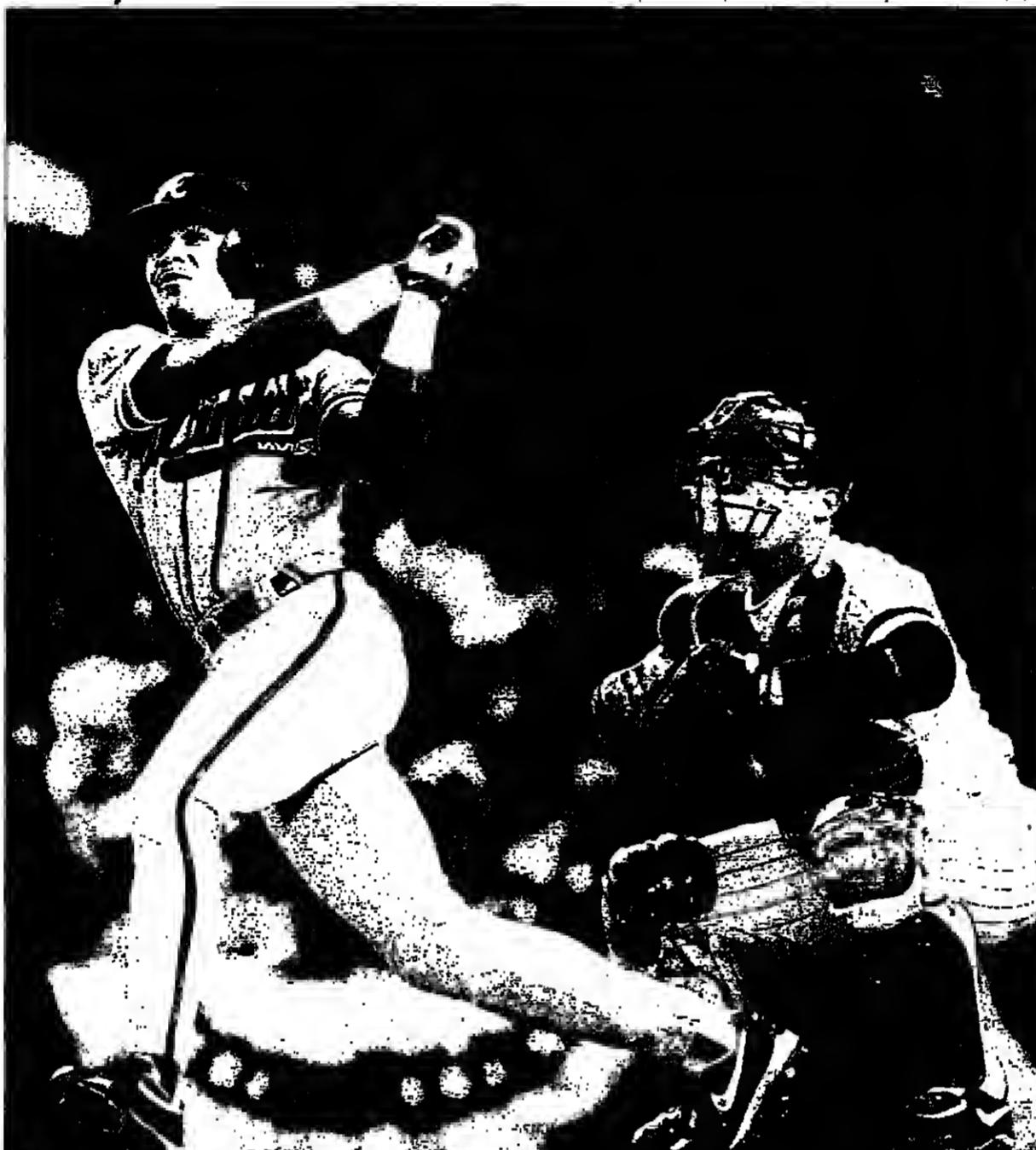
Things begin well enough. On the mound, the Braves' pitcher, John Smoltz, seems a little shaky. It is 0 runs each at the end of the first inning. Theo, a little-known teenager from Curacao comes on the field and the Yankee fans get their first premonitions of the disaster that is to come. With a scorching hit that sends the ball soaring out across left field and into the crowd, Andruw Jones, at just 19 years and 6 months, becomes the youngest player to hit a home run in a World Series game. On my press-desk TV monitor I glimpse DiMaggio in his box seated next to Henry Kissinger. Both look worried.

It is the third inning, however, when the pilgrimage of hope really turns into one of despair. Already it is 5-0 against the Yankees, and Jones is back on the plate. Pow! Another home run. It does not help the mood in the press area when it is discovered that the record that has been broken by Jones had until then been held by none other than Mantle, with the homer he hit for the Yankees against the Brooklyn Dodgers back in 1952. Mantle had been 20 – a full year older than Jones.

The fans are getting sour. They have suffered the sight of their revered pitcher Andy Pettitte being relieved of his duty after the first Jones home run and replaced by Brian Boehringer who is barely more successful. Smoltz of the Braves in the meantime is cruising. He will end the night giving away only two hits in total. When Jones, who began the season in the lower reaches of the minor leagues before joining the Braves only in August, returns to hit for a third time, the Stadium erupts in loud boos.

And then at the top of the fifth a run from the Yankees. The video display goes nuts. "THE YANKS ARE COMING, HEY HO". The crowd attempts to sing "Hey Ho", but it is awfully thin. That was the Yankee run. We sort of knew that a more would be coming tonight. Some Yankees supporters, who were filling out of the ground by the seventh inning, had a paid even two grand, for seats and their reward was a terrible knee in the guts from the Braves. By the end, the score was a humiliating 12-1. What they had witnessed was the worst loss in a World Series game by the Yankees in all of their history.

Mark, an analyst with Morgan Stanley, cannot even think of the next game. "Really, I'm too bitter. It's all inside me, and it's bitter. Ask me in the morning, and maybe we can talk about the rest of the series". Mark had paid a broker \$325 (£205) for his top-tier ticket. He does not expect to be back. He will only pray that the Bronx Bombers do not bomb again, as they have again, but soar back to make a real contest of the 1996 World Series.



Winners all: Andruw Jones (above) hits the first of two home runs in the World Series, DC United (left) celebrate their victory in the MLS Cup final and Tiger Woods (right) triumphs in the Walt Disney World Classic. Photographs: AP/Reuter



Hurricane Tiger sweeps in Britain rules the Windy City Aikman rescues Cowboys

Having defied history, the law of averages, and the best efforts of 80 of his peers to win his second professional tournament in this weekend, only one question remains to be answered about 20-year-old Tiger Woods: where will it all end?

The victory of golf's new sensation in the Walt Disney/Oldsmead event in Florida at the weekend was sealed with a final round of 66, giving him a 21-under-par total of 267, and a one-stroke margin over Payne Stewart. Woods earned a \$216,000 (£135,000) prize and – even more indicative – a front-page splash yesterday on the austere *New York Times*. Such is the growing phenomenon of Tigermania.

Instead of slipping into seasonal obscurity, golf is sharing the sporting headlines in America with professional football and baseball's World Series. And the reason for the excitement is no longer even that Woods is a coloured kid (his father is black, his mother is Thai) breaking into a white man's sport. That fact may have won him a \$40m Nike sponsorship deal. But fans now turn out in the tens of thousands not to study his race, but ogle a breathtaking swing that sends the ball further (and straighter) than John Daly.

Woods is hailed as the new Arnold Palmer or Jack Nicklaus; in fact his debut has been infinitely more spectacular. In his first seven tournaments on the 1995 tour, Palmer had two top-10 finishes. Seven years on, Nicklaus had only one – although he would win the 1962 US Open. Tiger has

GOLF
Tiger Woods has taken the USPGA Tour by storm. **Rupert Cormwell** reports

now finished in the top five in five straight tournaments, the first player to do so since Curtis Strange in 1982.

He joined the tour in August after a third consecutive US Amateur title, with the goal of merely gaining his PGA tour card. Instead, in barely two months, he has won \$74,794, putting him 23rd on the overall 1995 moneywinnings list and earning him a spot in next week's elite \$3m Tour Championship.

Most chilling for his rivals however was Woods' own assessment of his unbelievable streak: "I haven't really played my best yet," he said. "I've hit the ball pretty good but not the greatest, and I haven't had the greatest putting round yet."

Even so, success does not surprise him. "What you guys don't understand," he said after the Walt Disney victory, "is that when I was playing before in pro events I was a teenager, I was in high school and in college. I had term papers and exams... and I was never able to get into a rhythm to play. Now that I'm out here full time, just look at my finishes – 60th, 11th, fifth, third, first, third, first. It's kind of a good rhythm."

Paul Evans and Marian Sutton, who completed a win double for Britain in Sunday's Chicago Marathon, were able to reflect at leisure yesterday on the two best performances of their careers.

Evans, second in last year's New York marathon and third in the London race six months ago, was especially delighted with his clocking of 2hr 8min 52sec, well inside his previous best of 2:10:31. Sutton, controversially left out of the Olympics team this summer, recorded 2:30:41, also a personal best.

Both runners were at least £27,000 richer for winning in the Windy City, not counting time bonuses which will be worth a further £14,000 in Evans's case.

"That will help pay off the mortgage for a little while," said the 35-year-old father of two who took up athletics only 10 years ago after playing non-League football in East Anglia. "I didn't know how much I was on for in time bonuses. You can't think about money when you are running."

The conditions, just as he had hoped, suited him ideally – "It was 50 degrees, with no wind at all. A very fresh, nice day," he made the most of it, pulling away from Leonid Shvetsov, of Russia, after 18 miles and consolidating his advantage with three sub-4min 50sec miles.

Evans thus became only the third Briton to break 2hr 9min. He joins Steve Jones – who ran the British record of 2:07:13 on virtually the same course 11 years ago – Paul Davies-Hale and Eamonn

MARATHON
Mike Rowbottom on a double triumph for Paul Evans and Marian Sutton

Martin as a British winner in the Windy City

Martin, who won last year's race, finished fourth, while fellow Briton Gary Staines came in fifth.

Second place to the Great North Run last month, and a 10 miles personal best in Amsterdam of 46min 34sec three weeks ago, had convinced Evans that he had a real chance of doing well in Chicago after New York, surprisingly, did not find room in its budget for him this year.

He realised he had the race won after 23 miles when the course looped in a U-turn and he could see his nearest rivals running in the opposite direction. "I thought: 'Hang on, I've got a long lead here,'" he said. With a mile to go, after one last look back, he was able to enjoy the moment.

For Sutton, who trains by herself around the streets of her home town of Looe, in Cornwall, the final mile was where the race was won as she overhauled the American runner Kristy Johnson, who had held a 40-second lead after 21 miles.

"I was unjustly left off the Olympic team," Sutton said. "I had a point to prove, and I think I've done that."

The Dallas Cowboys warmed up for their most important game of the regular season by posting their least convincing victory on Sunday. And for the Cowboys of '96 that takes some doing.

In five days' time they come face to face with their creator, Jimmy Johnson, a confrontation laden with personal and professional connotations. By common consent Johnson, in his first year at the helm of the Miami Dolphins, is ahead of schedule as he attempts to make his new team the relentless winners the Cowboys once were. By common consent also, the Cowboys – now coached by the charismatic but unconvincing Barry Switzer – are nowhere near the form that has won three Super Bowls in the last four years.

The visit of the winless Atlanta Falcons seemed the ideal fixture to prepare the Cowboys for the bigger battles to come, but even the league's patricians can give the Boys a run for their money these days. The Falcons led 28-25 deep into the fourth quarter. A 60-yard touchdown pass from Troy Aikman to Kelvin Martin secured a somewhat fortuitous win, but did little to dispel the feeling that something is rotten in the state of Switzer-land.

Miami's preparation was far from ideal, beaten 35-28 in Philadelphia. Irving Fryar, released by the ruthless Johnson, caught four TD passes from Ty Detmer. "They probably still don't want me back," Fryar said. The Dolphins were no more impressive against the run, with Ricky Williams rambunctious for 173 yards. The shock of the day nearly came in San Francisco, where the 49ers trashed Cincinnati 21-0 with both their front-line quarterbacks having been knocked from the game. At this point a limping Steve Young, having already aggravated his troublesome groin injury, returned to the field and demonstrated why the 49ers pay him \$5m a year.

He passed for 274 yards, including a couple of TDs, but saved the best until last, limping into the end zone for the winning score with 63 seconds left. "You could not ask for a more gutsy performance," Young's head coach, George Seifert, said after the 28-21 win.

That game was the Bengals last under Dave Shula, who yesterday became the season's first head coaching casualty when he was sacked and replaced for the rest of the season by his offensive coordinator Bruce Coslet. Having recently become the fastest coach to a half century of losses, in many ways the surprise was that Shula lasted so long. The son of Miami's legendary leader Don, Dave was never able to emulate his father. With both being removed from their posts in the last 10 months it has been a bad year for the Shula family. Results, standings, Digest, page 25

Stars, bars and a golden goal to relish

SOCCER

John Carlin watches as a nation is enthralled by a cup final that promises to lift the game into a new dimension

Fairy-tale. Epic. Pulsating. Historic. All the clichés apply to describe the biggest domestic soccer match ever played on American soil, the five-goal thriller that decided the outcome of the first ever Major League Soccer cup final on Sunday.

DC United, the underdogs from Washington, defeated Los Angeles Galaxy, already established as the glamour club of the MLS, by three goals to two, having been two goals down with 17 minutes of the match remaining. The winner, a sudden-death "golden goal", came five minutes into extra time.

The game was played in the sort of conditions that persuaded the faint hearts of Merseyside to call off Sunday's derby: relentless torrential rain that, even before the game began, had reduced large areas of New England's Foxboro pitch to conditions more suitable for water polo. Most parts of the stadium provided no cover from the elements, yet 35,000 fans, the majority neutrals, stayed through to the end and for the celebrations beyond.

The big fish, before the game began, were Galaxy, who dominated the infant MLS season after winning their first 12 games in a row and then proceeded to pack in consistently the biggest crowds in the league: 30,000-plus. United, on the other hand, lost eight of their first 10 matches and rarely saw crowds of more than 20,000 at Washington's RFK Memorial Stadium. By the end of May it appeared as clear that Galaxy were going to cruise to glory – either them or Tampa Bay Mutiny, who in the blond, dreadlocked Colombian Carlos Valderrama have enjoyed the services of the award-winning MLS player of the year.

Yet, against all the odds, DC United beat Tampa roundly in the best-of-three semi-final play-offs after defeating Roberto Donadoni's New York/New Jersey MetroStars in the quarters. It is perhaps inappropriate to draw comparisons so early on in the life of US professional soccer, but until their latehurst United appeared to be the Coventry of the MLS – plucky but condemned to lower table anonymity. Pluck was the quality most required in Sunday's appalling weather conditions and it was Galaxy who displayed more of it initially – all the more admirable as they come from Southern California, where it never rains. For this they had Eduardo Hurtado to thank. Remarkably for an Ecuadorian, Hurtado is 6ft 3in and weighs 14 stone. He is strong, hard, fast and full of heart – a little too much, perhaps, as he was fortunate not to be sent off by the referee for playing at times as if this were not to be soccer but American football.

It was he who scored the first goal in the fifth minute, spreading the ball wide from midfield to El Salvador's diminutive Mauricio Cienfuegos on the right wing, running into the penalty area to meet a curling cross and rising high above the defense to power a header the top right hand corner. So dominant was Hurtado in the first half against his marker, United's home-grown central defender Edwin Pope, that one of the commentators on ABC Television remarked that Hurtado's nickname should be changed from the "Tank" to "all-purpose, all-terrain vehicle".

As the game progressed Pope, one of the few black American players in MLS, began to get the measure of the mighty Hurtado, began to look, indeed, like the very model of the fast, skillful, intelligent defender the modern game increasingly requires. It was he who sparked United's sudden festivities when he scored the winning goal, also from an excellent header, after a cross from the man-of-the-match, Bolivia's Marco Antonio Etcheverry.

Despite the ABC commentators' observation early on that Galaxy's Cobi Jones and United's John Harkes would both benefit from their experience in England – "these are pretty well normal field conditions for a game in the English league" – they did not stink. The ABC men did volunteer a couple of other odd remarks, such as "a 2-0 lead in soccer is the most dangerous lead you can have", but all in all they displayed an understanding of the game that has matured enormously since the baby-talk US viewers endured – or perhaps required – during the last World Cup.

The standard of play has also matured. As the US national team showed in the World Cup there is no shortage of energy and enthusiasm in the American game, but the whole has tended to be greater than the parts. But what Sunday's cup final revealed is that the finesse of players like Etcheverry and Valderrama has rubbed off on the natives. They may have no individuals yet who match the skill of the Latin Americans on the ball, but the teams play the ball along the ground, try a lot of one-touch passing and provide glimpses of what lies ahead in the years to come when the best of the millions of American children for whom soccer has become the dominant sport take on and – as they surely will – beat the world.

No less important, America's sports-mad TV public is slowly but surely taking to soccer. As the *Washington Post* reported in a lyrical front page story yesterday, in sports bars all over Washington bar-owners switched their TVs from the Redskins' NFL game against the New York Giants to the MLS final. The American football fans not only failed to register any complaints, they were immediately consumed by the fever of the all-new spectacle. It was, according to the *Post*, "an improbable finish that American professional leagues with decades of history would surely envy". And it provided the appropriately heroic finale to an MLS season that has exceeded all expectations in terms of crowd attendance, TV ratings, drama and quality of play. DC United's club motto is "The Tradition Begins". It has proved happily prescient, for them and for soccer in the United States generally.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Matt Tench reports on the skirmish before the Cowboys' big battle

The shock of the day nearly came in San Francisco, where the 49ers trashed Cincinnati 21-0 with both their front-line quarterbacks having been knocked from the game. At this point a limping Steve Young, having already aggravated his troublesome groin injury, returned to the field and demonstrated why the 49ers pay him \$5m a year.

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In the professional game, outside-halves will have to go the way centres have gone. They will have to be heavier and stronger

For me, the most interesting aspect of the rugby season in England so far has been the attempted conversion of Will Carling not only into an outside-half, but into a place-kicker as well. Already he fulfils both functions for his club. It is being hinted that he may perform one, or even the two of them, for his country also.

It is a truism that great outside-halves are born, not made. What they have traditionally possessed has been a certain arrogance, the will and the ability to control events. Barry John had these qualities in abundance. Mike Gibson was less commanding but equally in control. He became a centre partly to accommodate John at outside-half with the 1971 Lions. There are, indeed, numerous cases of outside-halves

who have become centres; fewer centres who have turned themselves into outside-halves.

The most famous illustration of a transplant that failed took place provided by Bleddyn Williams in 1947. For months it had been confidently asserted in Wales that the great Cardiff centre's 'real' position was at outside-half. He was duly played there in Wales' first full post-war international against England, but failed to make much impact on a game which England narrowly won through a drop goal by his opposite number, 'Nim' Hall. Afterwards, Williams reverted to his normal position.

Carling is seven years older than Williams was on that occasion. No one, as far as I know, claimed dur-

ing Carling's previous career that he was really an outside-half. The late Clem Thomas did once say to me that his best position would be full-back, but that is slightly different. Today, Carling asserts – what no one had suspected before – that he always wanted to be an outside-half.

Now that Carling's ambition has been belatedly realised, it is not absurd in execution. Among my colleagues I am perhaps in a minority. In the professional game, outside-halves will have to go the way centres have already gone. They will have to be heavier and stronger.

A few years ago a centre such as Lawrence Smith of Saracens was considered a virtual freak because he weighed 15 stones. Today, centres of more than that weight are 10 a



ALAN WATKINS
penny in the First and Second Divisions. At just over 14 stones, Carling is suited to survival in these new, rougher times.

He has played quite well for Harlequins too – as an outside-half,

that is, rather than as a place-kicker. The Quins would not have been the commanding force they are if he had been incompetent. His kicking is prodigious as it always was. His passing is good. He can make the odd half-break. All he lacks is a certain authority, an arrogance if you like.

This is odd when you come to think about it. For that last quality, what Carling was always accused of possessing in over-generous measure. Yet, watching the Quins, you get the impression that events are not being controlled by Carling but by Gary Connolly, who plays at outside-centre.

When against Neath last Saturday Connolly went off injured to be replaced by the outside-half Paul

Challinor, Carling reverted to the centre, where he appeared more at ease with himself.

Jack Rowell has said he has decided the English captaincy but is not telling anyone. This is a typical Rowell tease. Can it be, however, that the mystery man is not Lawrence Dallaglio, as everyone has assumed, but Phil de Gians? This would certainly make sense of Carling's move. The English midfield would then consist of Carling, de Gians and Jeremy Guscott.

With Mike Catt retaining his place at full-back, this would – in the absence of both Jonathan Callard and Paul Grayson – leave England without a recognised place-kicker. Is this, I wonder, the reason why, late in life, Carling has decided to seek

his fortune through the boot? Perhaps there is a simpler explanation, to do with club rather than with country.

The best kicker in the First Division, the wing Michael Corcoran, whom Quins enticed from London Irish, is injured. Even so, it might be doubtful whether he could command a regular place in the Quins three-quarter line. Likewise, Challinor, a better goal-kicker than he is an outside-half, is denied a place with the stars. So the duty falls on Carling.

That is the simpler explanation. It may be that Rowell has something altogether more adventurous up his sleeve. I still think it would be madness to embark on the Five Nations Championship without a proper place-kicker – which Carling is not.

RFU under pressure to end row

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWITT

The Rugby Football Union's power battle with its recalcitrant senior clubs has been about as fast-moving as Dean Richards on a mucky day at Leicester, but when the two sides resume their long-winded talks today the marathon may have a sprint finish. The RFU are under enormous pressure from outside interests, including their bankers, to settle the issue.

Rebuilding work at Twickenham has put the RFU in debt to the tune of £34m and their treasurer, Colin Herridge, admitted yesterday that the lenders would be taking a close interest in the progress of the latest round of negotiations. A corporation tax bill is about to land on the governing body's doormat and with Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB in impatient mood – they have offered £27m for the right to broadcast European rugby and are pushing for an answer – the squeeze is on from all directions.

"It would be wrong to say that our bankers are telling us how to handle these talks, but they are taking a keen interest in what is happening and, like the RFU, they recognise that it would be far more beneficial to all concerned to work together with the clubs rather than

face a breakaway situation," said Herridge, who is on the RFU's four-man negotiating team. "I am upbeat about the prospects for today's meeting."

Erpru, the organisation representing clubs from England's top two divisions, remains suspicious of their opponents despite the fact that some £1.4m in new money is thought to be on the table. They have accused the RFU of throwing away approximately £4m in corporation tax by failing to use profits to finance the game at grass roots level, although Herridge denied the allegation.

"They say that, but we are prepared to sit down with them and our tax advisers to work out the best arrangement," he said. "Anyway, the £4m figure would only arise if the Sky deal went through. The current figure is rather less."

Both are expressing an interest in the Argentinian front row forward Federico Menendez, who gained notoriety as a teenager six years ago by being sent off at Twickenham for punching the England lock Paul Ackford. He has since developed into one of the most powerful and versatile tight forwards in world rugby.

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